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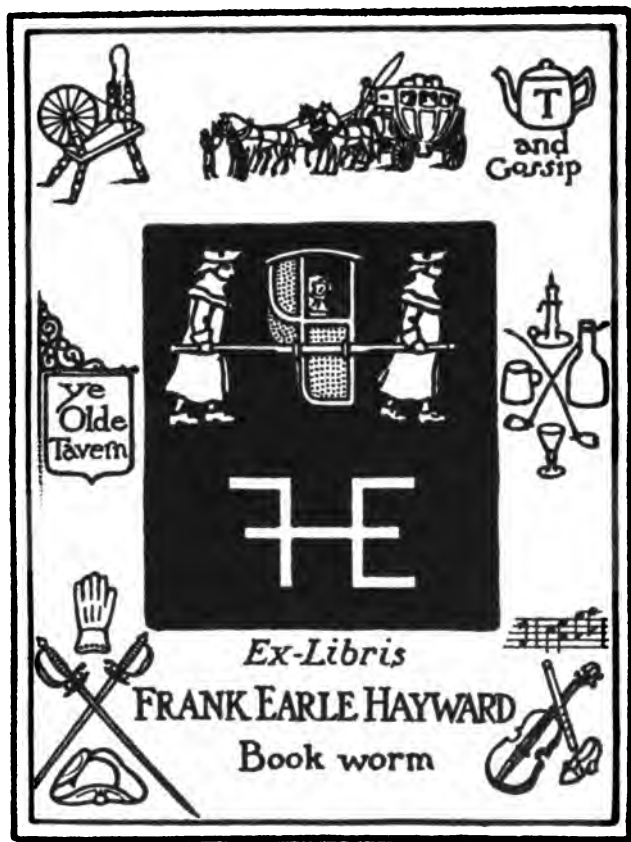
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Some Old Time Meeting Houses  
of the Connecticut Valley



C. A. Wright



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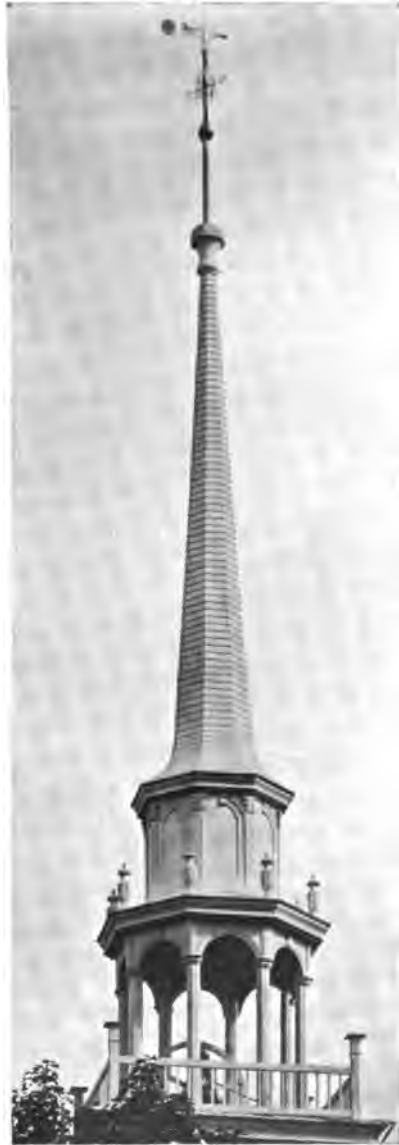












FARMINGTON CHURCH SPIRE

# **Some Old Time Meeting Houses of the Connecticut Valley**

By  
**CHARLES ALBERT WIGHT, B. A.**

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**Minister of the Congregational Church  
in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts**

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Chicopee Falls, Mass.

**THE RICH PRINT**  
Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts

## Foreword

The white meeting houses of the Connecticut Valley were familiar objects to the writer of this book in his boyhood, and, wherever he has gone since, he has carried with him a mental picture of these fine old houses of worship. Upon his return to the region three years ago for ministerial service, he conceived the idea of perpetuating by pen and picture some of the best examples of these structures.

The difficulty of deciding what examples to include and what to exclude in the treatment of his subject has been almost as great as that experienced by some of the first settlements in setting a stake for the meeting house lot. The governing principle has been the illustration of the churches built between 1780 and 1850. A few houses of worship built in the earlier periods of the history of the region are included, and the pen sketches are meant to tell the story of meeting house building in the Connecticut Valley from the beginning down to the erection of the latest examples of Colonial buildings. Many worthy examples have been omitted, and a few houses of worship have been included whose architectural value is small, but which for other reasons the author has been pleased to use in the illustration of his subject. It will be seen that almost every variety of meeting house known to the Connecticut Valley prior to 1850 is represented in the following pages.

The homes of the men and women by whom the houses of worship illustrated in this book were built are rapidly being occupied by people of other races and other ideas. If his effort to put into permanent

form the old time houses of worship in the Connecticut Valley shall, even to a small degree, impress future occupants of the region with the value of the institutions and the nobility of character of the race that created the old New England, the writer will be amply compensated for his labors.

One of the compensations of his work has been the correspondence which the author has had with a large number of interesting people, especially the ministers of the churches represented in the book, who have been most obliging in their efforts to render him assistance in gathering materials for his volume. To the more than five hundred persons, who generously subscribed for his book in advance of publication, the author is indebted for the freedom from anxiety as to the financial issue of his enterprise which he has enjoyed in the prosecution of his labors.

He is much indebted to Mr. Albert W. Buckley, art director of the Springfield Photo-Engraving Company, for the fine workmanship displayed in the halftones, and to Mr. Lester D. Rich, of Chicopee Falls, Mass., for his faithful and successful efforts to put into effect the author's ideas in the printing and binding of the book.

He has gained valuable information from a large number of historical addresses, town histories, works on architecture, town records, and church manuals.

To all who have in any way aided him in his undertaking he wishes to express his sense of obligation and his thanks.

C. A. W.

Easter 1911

**T**O her who in the morning of her  
young womanhood became my wife  
and ever since has been my constant  
and efficient helper in the work of the  
Christian ministry, this volume is  
affectionately and gratefully dedicated.  
Easter 1911. Charles A. Wight.

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AUTHOR, KINDLY PERMIT HIM TO  
MENTION THEM AS PATRONS OF  
HIS BOOK.

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## The Genesis of the Old Time Meeting House

*Spires whose fingers point to Heaven.— Wordsworth.*

**D**URING the last century the stately white meeting house with its tapering spire was a familiar object in many of the Connecticut valley towns. Standing, as it often did, in the midst of noble elms, it presented a most graceful appearance. Many of these houses of worship have been preserved and are loved and admired by those who worship in them, or reside in their neighborhood. Some of them have been destroyed by fire, while a few have been taken down to make way for modern structures or the needs of the business world.

One who is familiar with the old buildings of the Kennebec valley in Maine, Portsmouth in New Hampshire, Salem, Boston and Plymouth in eastern Massachusetts, and the towns and cities of the Connecticut valley, knows that a hundred years ago a common type of domestic and public buildings prevailed in all of these places. The fact is readily explained. The dwellers in all of these places were descendants of the first settlers of New England, the Pilgrims and Puritans. The earliest inhabitants of the Connecticut valley constituted the first wave of that tide of emigration, which swept ever westward from the Atlantic seaboard, until it had spread over the Mohawk valley and the Mississippi basin, crossed the Rockies and the Sierras, and reached the Pacific ocean.

The same conditions prevailed from the beginning in all of the early settlements of New England. To write a history of architecture in New England during

the first hundred and fifty years after the landing of the Pilgrims on the shores of the New World, would be to give a narrative of primeval forests, dangers from Indians, fierce struggle with winter cold, scarcity of almost everything that makes human life comfortable, and lack of skilled architects and builders.

Almost all of the early settlements of the Connecticut valley were laid out on the same plan. There was a single long street, sometimes as much as three hundred feet wide, in the midst of which was a common, extending the whole length of the street. The church usually stood in the center of the common and the houses were built on either side of the street, the barns and out buildings being ranged back of the houses. The river was usually about half a mile back from the street on one side, while at about the same distance back from the other side was the swamp or range of hills. In many instances these towns remain to this day unchanged in plan. In later times the church was moved from the common and placed on one side of the street in line with the houses. Enfield, Connecticut, and Longmeadow, Hadley, and Hatfield in Massachusetts, are well known examples of the way in which almost all of the early settlements of the Connecticut valley were laid out.

In the construction of their houses and public buildings the first settlers used such materials as were at hand and built with special reference to warmth, space and protection from wild beasts and Indians. Even the meeting house was erected with a view to warding off assaults from the savages. The turret at the top of the house of worship served as a watch tower. The following is taken from a letter written in 1699 by Samuel Smith, of Hadley, Massachusetts: "Ye firste Meetinge House was solid mayde to withstand ye wicked onsaults of ye Red Skins. Its Foun-



**SPIRE OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH, BOSTON, WHICH HAD AN  
IMPORTANT INFLUENCE UPON LATER DESIGNS FOR CHURCH  
SPIRES IN NEW ENGLAND. CHURCH BUILT 1729**



**THE FIRST CHURCH ERECTED IN CONNECTICUT**

dations was laide in ye feare of ye Lord, but its Walls was truly laide in ye feare of ye Indians, for many and grate was ye Terrors of em. I do mind me y't alle ye able-bodied Men did work thereat, and ye olde and feeble did watch in towns to espie if any Savages was in hidinge neare, and every Man kept his Musket right to his hande”.

The first houses and churches were built of logs taken from the forest. The buildings which succeeded these first structures were strictly utilitarian in design, little or no attempt having been made at ornamentation. The time came, however, when the prosperity of the people enabled them to erect more pretentious houses, and public buildings were constructed with some regard to architectural principles and effect. A large number of old houses may still be seen in New England, which were built in this period. They are square structures, extremely plain on the outside, except for the front doorways, which are characterized by their classical style of architecture. A large number of such houses were built in the last half of the eighteenth century.

Some of these houses were highly ornamented within. In recent years there has been a marked tendency toward external ornamentation in the construction of buildings of every kind. It was consistent with the character of the earlier generations in New England to avoid external ornamentation in the building of their houses and make the interior as beautiful as the materials and means at their disposal permitted. The highly ornamented doorway was a hint of the beauty and refinement to be looked for within. It is interesting to note that our Puritan ancestors in the construction of their houses copied the ornamentations of heathen temples in the making of their doorways. The beautiful doorways of many of the old



houses still standing in New England are a copy of architectural embellishments used by the ancients in the construction of their idol temples.

In the main, our ancestors were Roman in their architectural tastes. The architect Minard Lafevre, has written, "Architecture owes its origin to necessity", and it is certain that the utilitarian motive controlled in the first building enterprises of our forefathers.

The builders of the early domestic structures made much use of certain books, which may be described as builders' assistants. The names of some of these were, "Builders' Companions", "Gentlemen's and Builders' Repositories", "Builders' Jewels". A book of this kind was published in Greenfield, Massachusetts, 1797, by Asher Benjamin, a carpenter. It contained illustrations and descriptions for the use of builders and was an attempt, as one writer has observed, to translate the Classic into the vernacular. The designs of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren were adapted to the needs of the region. Benjamin's book had a large influence in shaping the domestic architecture of western New England in the first half of the nineteenth century. The book also contained designs for churches.

A copy of one of the best of these books, "The City and Country Builders' and Workman's Treasury of Designs", is owned by Miss Mary H. Carter, of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. It was published in London in 1756 and is a large volume of many pages. It contains plates and descriptions of the ornamental parts of buildings, monuments, tables, book cases, time pieces, pulpits, altar pieces, iron gates, and so forth. The copper plates are very fine. This book was owned and used by Miss Carter's grandfather, Elias Carter, who died in 1864, and also by her great grandfather, Timothy Carter, who died in 1845. They were both

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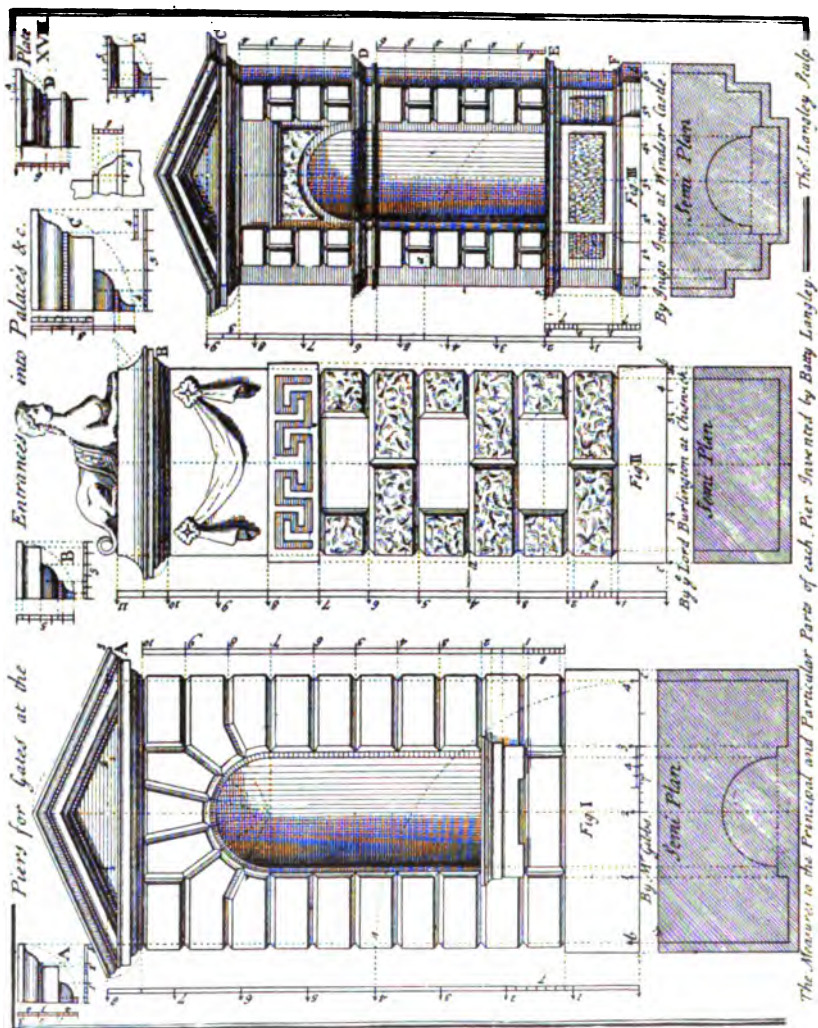
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TITLE PAGE OF A BUILDER'S BOOK OWNED AND USED BY TIMOTHY  
 CARTER, BUILDER, IN THE FIRST DECADES OF THE LAST CENTURY.  
 AND ALSO BY HIS SON, ELIAS CARTER, WHO DIED IN 1864.



ONE OF THE COPPER PLATES IN THE CARTER BOOK

builders, Elias Carter, having built several fine churches in and near Worcester, Massachusetts. The accompanying illustrations give a good idea of the book.

When the first settlers had erected their houses, they next gave attention to the construction of the meeting house. Not long after came the school house, and still later the town hall. Doubtless the promptness with which the people of some of the secondary towns proceeded to build a meeting house and engage a minister was due in part to the fact that grants of privileges to establish a plantation were made upon the express condition that the inhabitants settle and support "a learned Orthodox minister of good conversation". Like the first houses of the settlers, the meeting houses were small rude structures made of logs squared at the ends. In rare instances they were built of timber, laboriously sawn by hand. One of the earliest of these meeting houses is described as being twenty six feet long, eighteen feet wide, nine feet in the clear, and having two windows, a door and a chimney. In this particular house there was no pulpit and only rude benches for seats.

As the settlements grew in size and wealth the first structures erected for religious worship were set aside for other purposes, or taken down, and more commodious buildings constructed in their place.

In most towns the second meeting house was a severely plain structure made of sawn timber. It was square, with a roof of pyramidal form. On the apex was a small cupola in which the bell was hung, the rope hanging down in the broad aisle. It was the exception that a bell actually hung in the turret. The inhabitants in many places were called together for worship by sounding a trumpet, beating a drum, or blowing a conch shell. These houses of worship were "decently seated". There might be four windows

in each side; opposite the door was the pulpit. The men sat in the broad aisle at the right of the minister as he faced the congregation, and the women at the left.

The third class of meeting houses erected in New England assumed much larger proportions than those which preceded them and considerable attention was given to ornamentation. Some of these later structures had two rows of windows in each side and a tall ornamented steeple surmounted by a weather vane. The third meeting house erected in Springfield, Massachusetts, was a good example of this style of buildings.

Most of the fine examples of Colonial meeting houses in the Connecticut valley and other parts of New England were erected in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. The work done by the builders in this period commands our admiration and affection. The columns, pilasters, and entablatures used in ornamenting the buildings are exceedingly beautiful and show excellent taste. The committee appointed by the First Parish, Hatfield, Massachusetts, in 1849, to erect the new meeting house were instructed to have a portico built in front supported by four Ionic columns. In many instances the façade was a remarkable creation.

In the nineteenth century the increase of wealth led, as was inevitable, to a reaction from the ascetic ideas and practices of the early settlers of the country.

Love of the beautiful, a quality with which the Creator has endowed men, began to find expression in the homes and public edifices of the people. The plain and almost barn like houses of worship, which had served the purpose of the people in the latter part of the century before, now gave place to much more pretentious buildings. In many instances the old structure was too small for the increased congregation.

The builders of the new meeting houses were men of taste and skill in their profession. When the

project of a new house of worship arose it might happen that some one of the parties interested had seen, while on a journey to Boston, or elsewhere, a stately meeting house, which he had admired and now recollected. This became the pattern with more or less modification, according to the necessities of the case, of the new house of worship. When the third meeting house in Northampton was planned a committee was appointed to go and view several notable houses of worship.

It has been stated that the stately and highly ornamented steeples of many of the old time meeting houses of New England have no family relation to the house of worship itself. The impression also prevails to some extent that Puritan ideas and influences controlled in making many of the houses extremely plain both outside and within. It seems more probable that the governing influence in the case was the limited means at the disposal of the builders. Their financial resources were, in most instances, not enough to enable them to ornament the entire structure. Hence the main body of the church was made extremely plain, and an effort was put forth to make the front and the steeple as beautiful as possible under the circumstances. In rare instances the entire building, especially the interior, was highly ornamented. A good example of this class of buildings is the Unitarian Church in Deerfield, Massachusetts, the interior of which is most elaborate in decoration and furnishing.

About the time of the building of the meeting house in Northampton, which stood on "Meeting House Hill" from 1812 to 1876, Isaac Damon came to Northampton from New York, where he had studied under the well known architect Ithiel Towne. Although only in his twenty-eighth year he was engaged to design

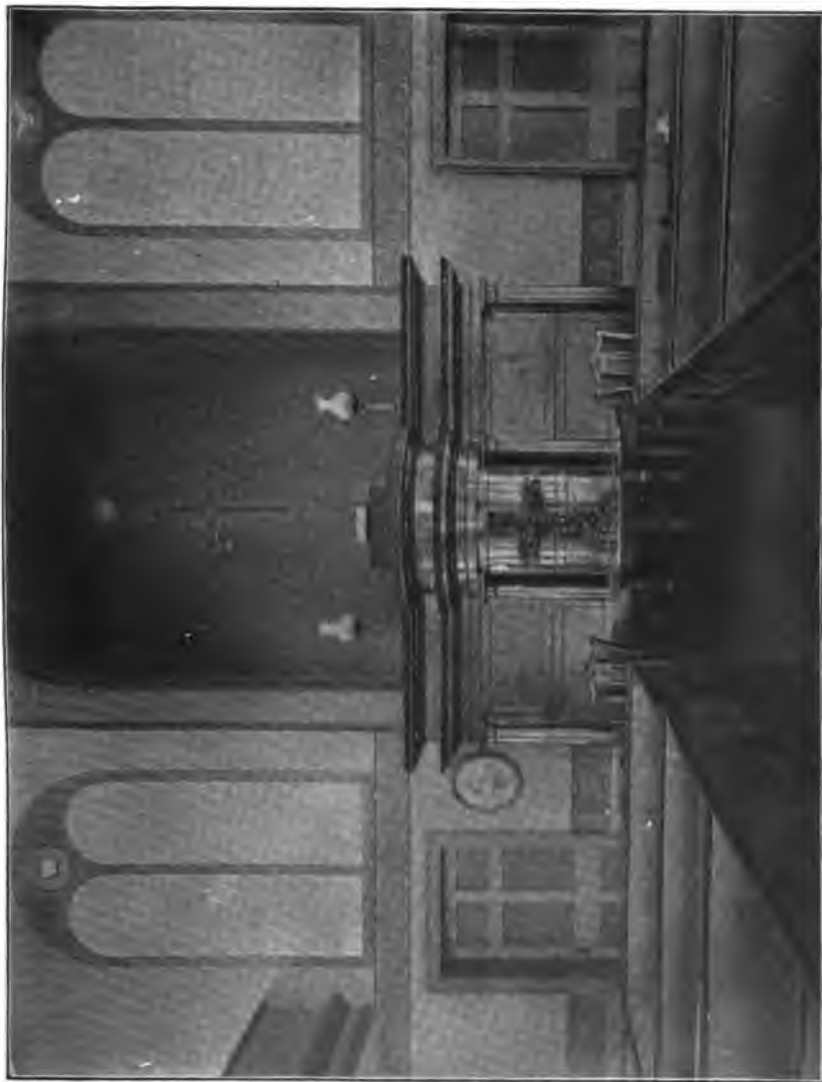
the new meeting house. This was his first independent work. His special work was bridge building and he designed a large number of bridges, nearly all of the bridges across the Connecticut, a half dozen over the Penobscot and some over the Mohawk, the Hudson and the Ohio, having been designed and built by him.

The church which Damon built in Northampton was the largest and most elaborate of any in western Massachusetts. It seated nearly two thousand people. He also built the stately house of worship of the First Parish of Springfield, which still stands on Court Square. At least a dozen of the houses of worship in western Massachusetts were designed by him. He exerted as great an influence upon the ecclesiastical architecture of the region as did Benjamin upon the domestic.

The first meeting houses were built not only with reference to purposes of religious worship, but also for general public use. The second story of the meeting house in Springfield was used for a time for storing grain. The first town meetings were held in the meeting house. The representatives of fifty towns, who met in Hatfield in the August Convention that preceded the Shays' Rebellion and drew up their list of "grievances", assembled in the Hatfield meeting house. There is record of murder trials having been held in the meeting house.

In some instances when the second house of worship was erected the first was used as a school house. It became the custom later to erect a town house along side of the meeting house. The style of architecture was much the same in the case of both buildings, except for the steeple which adorned the house of worship.

In the case of most of the meeting houses erected in the first decades of the last century the main portion of the building, like the older houses of worship, was



By permission of Frances and Mary Allen  
INTERIOR OF CHURCH, OLD DEERFIELD, MASS. CHURCH BUILT 1824. THE MAHOGANY PULPIT IS LOWER THAN WHEN FIRST BUILT. ONLY THE SQUARE PEWS AGAINST THE WALLS ARE RETAINED





**TOWN HALL BUILT NEXT TO THE CHURCH. HATFIELD, MASS.**

extremely plain and of a primitive type. As a rule, it was a rectangular oblong structure, built for the most part of wood, one or two stories high, and fitted with plain oblong windows. It had a square tower in front for entrance, surmounted by a small cupola for a bell, terminating usually in a slender spire with vane. In some instances, however, the façade was a marvelous creation. The steeple likewise was most beautiful. In the construction of the steeple the builders sometimes placed upon one form with its Classic adornments a second or third equally ornate form, with the Gothic or rounded roof.

The fine steeples of the old houses of worship in the Connecticut valley are imitations of English spires of the seventeenth century built by Sir Christopher Wren, which in turn were an English modification of Italian spires of an earlier time. A peculiarity of the spires of the period is the investment of the Gothic form with a clothing of Italian architecture.

From what has been written it may be seen that in the period beginning with the first settlements and closing with the middle of the last century four classes of meeting houses were built in the Connecticut valley towns. The first houses of worship were small rude structures that may be regarded as only a temporary provision for the religious needs of the settlers. The structures which followed the first houses were larger and made of better material. They were constructed with more regard to ecclesiastical proprieties and some of these structures were used for fifty or even seventy five years, before giving place to their successors.

The third class of meeting houses built by our forefathers were, in many instances, stately structures. The houses of worship in Farmington, Connecticut, Springfield and Northampton in Massachusetts were good examples of this class.

Most of the meeting houses of the fourth class were erected in the first half of the last century, many of them in the first and second decades of the century. The fine old churches, with their classical fronts and many storied spires, illustrated in the following sketches belong to this period. It will be seen that these churches bear a family resemblance to one another. Such houses of worship had already been built along the Atlantic seaboard.

The members of the historic Old South, Hallowell, Maine, of which the writer was pastor for several years, cherish traditions of a fine old house of worship erected in 1798. This church had a tall semi-circular pulpit reached by stairs on either side, extensive galleries supported by beautiful columns, pews with high backs and doors, a handsome belfry tower designed by the famous architect, Charles Bulfinch, of Boston, and a bell purchased from Paul Revere in 1802. The loss of this venerable landmark by fire on a winter night, 1878, filled the entire community with sorrow. The accompanying illustration is from a water-color sketch made by Miss Olive G. Hartwell of Boston.

It is probable that the builders of such houses of worship as the First Church of Christ in Springfield, erected in 1819, had in mind certain meeting houses in the eastern part of the state. Certainly the spire of the Old South Church of Boston had an important influence upon the designs used by the builders of some of the beautiful spires of the Connecticut valley towns in the first decades of the last century. It is probable that the spire of the church in Hadley, Massachusetts, was patterned after that of the Old North Church, Boston.

It is interesting to note that at first the people of New England did not attach the sanctity to the house of worship that is characteristic of the present gener-



OLD SOUTH CHURCH, HALLOWELL, MAINE. ERECTED 1798



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MONTAGUE, MASS. ERECTED 1834

ation of church goers. The edifice was styled a meeting house because it was used for general purposes. In the first years of the settlements of New England the meeting house was some times fortified and used as a place of refuge. Many of the families of the first settlers were in this way saved from massacre by the Indians.

Often the meeting house in New England was built on a hill top and the guard in the turret, sweeping the entire region round about with his eye, could readily espy the approach of an enemy. In such a spot the meeting house was comparatively safe from destruction by fire and easily defended from attack by the enemy. Its sides were conspicuous places for the posting of notices, and hides of wild beasts were sometimes nailed to the meeting house to dry. We must not think that our forefathers were prone to idolatry because they sought out the high places of the land as sites for their religious altars.

Rev. John W. Harding, late pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, in an address at the centennial celebration of the incorporation of the town of Longmeadow, gave a description of a Sabbath day, a century and a quarter ago, that may be fittingly incorporated into the present sketch. The address was given in 1883. The portion alluded to is as follows: "It is a Sabbath day, one hundred years ago. The second bell—first peal. From north and south and east the tribes come up—the whole population, afoot, in wagons—the farm wagons without springs. Some are drawn by horses, the rest by oxen. The women and the younger children and the old men sit on straight backed chairs or milking stools; the young men and maidens, and the boys, line the wayside. The bell begins to toll. The congregation throng the meeting house steps, the porches, and the aisles. It is the day of greetings, the social exchange, the news-

day, Dr. Williams at length emerges from the parsonage in gown and bands and powdered wig, three-cornered hat, knee breeches, silk or woolen stockings and silver shoe buckles. The bell will not stop tolling till he passes through the massive double door with iron-handled latch and into the high pulpit, with its carved work of grapes and pomegranates under the great sounding board. The deacons are seated in their railed pew beneath the pulpit.

There is no stove. For fifty-one years the frosty air of the new meeting house was only mitigated by the women's foot stoves and the cracking together of frozen boot heels. The parson sometimes preached in heavy homespun cloak and woolen mittens, and at the nooning, grateful indeed was the roaring fire in the great kitchen of the parsonage, at the tavern bar room, at all the hospitable neighbors' open houses. Comforting were the homemade lunches, the apples roasting on the hearth, the cider, the hot cider, that is to say—the flip. The congregation stand up to pray—bodily infirmity alone prevents. If one sits down in prayer time, it is a sudden and emphatic protest against the parson's praying for the king and royal family. That habit clings to Dr. Williams a little beyond the patriotic sufferance. Not that he is a 'tory', or 'inimical to the liberties of America' by any settled convictions; only an old man, to whom the times look dark, and 'fears are in the way'. In due time he reads from the pulpit, though not without some misgivings, the Declaration of Independence, and gives his benediction to the soldiers as they march from the church door to the camp of General Washington. For fifty years the congregation sit down to sing; but after the deacon has ceased to line out the psalm, and the pitch pipe no longer toots, and the singing master has organized the choir, and the bass viols and flutes conspire with young

men and maidens to make a joyful noise, they rise up, and face about to see the choir. Alas! the strife that raged awhile between the Psalter and Watt's Hymns; between free singing and that by rote—the unheavenly dissonance—'left', as Thomas Walter, the Roxbury pastor says, 'to the mercy of every unskilful throat to chop and alter, twist and change, according to their diverse fancies; and so little attention paid to time, that they were often one or two words apart, producing noises so hideous and disorderly as is bad beyond expression'.

The gallery of the new meeting house runs around the east, south and west walls, square pews line the gallery walls, the negro pew is in the south west corner, the boys of twelve occupy the next pew, the boys of fourteen the next, those of eighteen the next, it having the extra advantage of a window, and the boys of sixteen the last pew on that side. A similar arrangement for the girls in the eastern gallery; the single men and women of discreet age occupy the pews lining the south gallery wall. The choir seats run all around the gallery front, and the smaller children sit on benches directly behind the choir. In such an arrangement the necessity for tithing men is great. The seats of honor are in the broad aisle pews below nearest the pulpit; the pews are all free, but the seating committee assign them. They are first instructed 'to wait on Dr. Williams and know his pleasure, what pew in the meeting house he chooses for his family to sit in'. But after that, no easy task this 'dignifying the house'. Age is one consideration, property another, standing another".

So far as the records show, the congregation in Hadley, Massachusetts, was the first to make use of an iron stove, a stove having been placed in the Hadley meeting house in 1730. This action was de-



nounced by many and stoves did not come into common use in meeting houses of the Connecticut valley until a much later period. So cold were these houses in winter that the bread used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper was sometimes frozen. Judge Sewall in his Diary says, "Bread was frozen at Lord's Table". The tithing man was an important personage in the old meeting houses. He was given a convenient place in the congregation and the duty was assigned to him of keeping order and securing attention during the services. In his hand was a long stick, having at one end a rabbit's foot and at the other a rabbit's tail, or perhaps the feathery tail of a fox. The heavier end of the stick was laid upon the head of the nodding boy, while the face of the slumbering matron was gently brushed with the softer end of the wand.

In the "dignifying" or "seating" of the meeting house our forefathers departed very widely from the democratic teachings of the Bible. They were undoubtedly familiar with the Scripture, "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all". But in the matter of assignment of seats in the house of worship there was much respect shown to families of wealth and influence, and to persons of eminence and advanced years. In Springfield, Deacon Samuel Chapin and Thomas Cooper, the contractor employed in building the first meeting house, were given places of honor in the congregation. In West Springfield as late as the forepart of the last century there was an unwritten law that no young woman should occupy a front seat in the gallery, where the unmarried women sat, unless attired in a silk gown. It probably should be stated as a witticism, rather than an actual fact, that in a certain town in southern New England the people so arranged the burial of their dead that on the morning of the resurrection, when



**COPPER WEATHERCOCK**



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH SOUTHAMPTON, MASS. ERECTED 1788

the dead should rise and face eastward, the colored brethren would stand in the rear of the assembly.

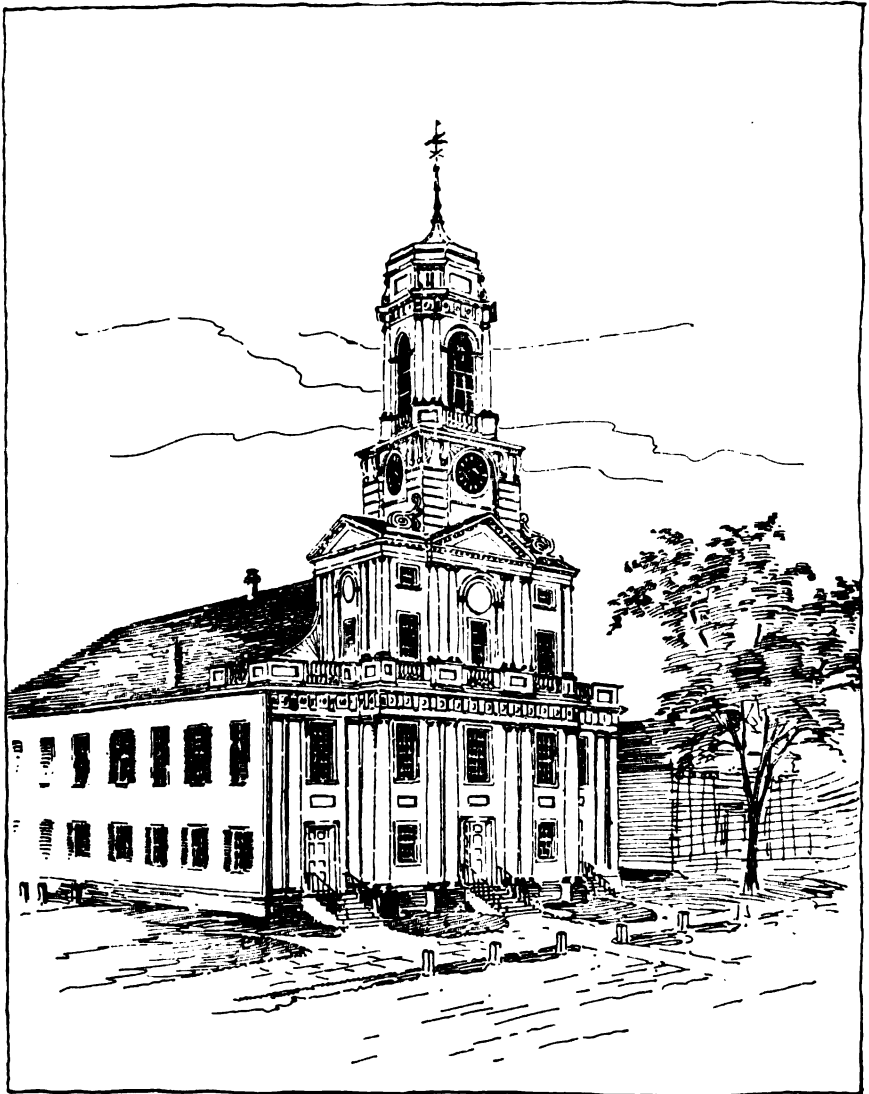
A notable feature of not a few of the old meeting houses of New England is the copper weather-cock, perched upon the top of the spire, the purpose of which is to remind the church of Peter's warning and constitute a call to repentance. The most famous of these church roosters are three that were made by a noted London coppersmith and brought to this country in 1750. One of these was placed on the spire of the Old South Church of Boston, one on the church in Newburyport, and the third on the church in Springfield.

His investigation of the building of the old time meeting houses has reminded the writer of the firm adherence to conviction which characterized the fathers and has illustrated how adherence to conviction may sometimes lead to real obstinacy in small matters, a noble quality thus being transformed into narrowness of spirit. It sometimes happened that when action favorable to the building of a house of worship had been taken, a bitter contention over the location of the proposed building postponed the erection of the meeting house for several years. In several instances, it is recorded that no settlement of the difficulty could be effected until a committee had been called in from outside. In Southampton the building of the house of worship was delayed for seven years because of the inability of the people to agree upon a site. There was still longer delay in other cases. In some notable instances the General Court was appealed to for help.

Many of the old churches of the Connecticut valley are still in a good state of preservation. Almost every place of importance has one or more examples of this type of meeting house. These old houses of worship are familiar landmarks. They are regarded with love

and admiration by the descendants of the men who built them and their preservation is a matter of earnest solicitude. This book is a sincere attempt to present in picture and story some of the best examples of the old meeting houses of the Connecticut valley. The writer is one of thousands of his generation who have been influenced in ideals and character by the stately houses of worship here illustrated. May these noble structures long remain a memorial of the Christian faith and sturdy character of their builders.





FIRST CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON, MASS., 1812.

## The Old First Church Northampton, Massachusetts

**B**ARBER in his quaint book, "Historical Collections", published nearly three quarters of a century ago, wrote of Northampton, "The original planters were twenty one in number, and the legal grant was made to them in 1654 by 'John Pynchon, Elizur Holyoke, and Samuel Chapin, commissioners for laying out Nonotuck, by the general court', and the settlement of the town commenced the same year".

The first settlers came to what Baedeker describes as "the frontispiece of the book of beauty which Nature opens wide in the Connecticut Valley", at the time when Louis the Fourteenth was King of France and Oliver Cromwell Lord High Protector of Great Britain.

A perusal of the pages of the Hampshire County Gazetteer, 1654 to 1887, readily convinces one that few towns in the country exerted so large an influence upon colonial and national affairs as did Northampton in the early years of the country's history. Here resided Joseph Hawley, patriot and statesman; Seth Pomeroy, who was greeted with cheers by the troops at Bunker's Hill, when, after a hurried horseback ride from Northampton, he received a musket and advanced to the "rail fence", where the fight was hottest; Caleb Strong, for eleven years Governor of the Commonwealth, one of the committee of four who drew up the original constitution of Massachusetts, United States Senator, and member of the Philadelphia committee that framed the constitution of the United States;



Rev. Solomon Stoddard, pastor of the First Church from 1672 to 1729, fifty seven years, urbane, scholarly, eloquent, and influential among all the ministers and churches of New England; Jonathan Edwards, theologian, metaphysician, scholar and idealist, well described in the homely lines :

"Edwards, a wonder of logic rare;  
His preaching, earnest, faithful, sound,  
His books profound beyond compare,  
Have spread his fame the world around".

It was inevitable that a community abounding in such men should develop a vigorous, militant religious life and build meeting houses eminently worthy of presentation in picture and story. The First Church in Northampton was organized June 18, 1661. The church's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary will be celebrated the coming summer.

The center of political and religious life in Northampton in former generations was "Meeting House Hill". On this spot stood the historic houses of worship described in this sketch, and here the people used to meet for discussion of town affairs and the worship of God. The locality also became a judicial center and here many a famous legal trial took place. It was here that Webster and Choate contended in masterly fashion over the provisions of the Oliver Smith will. Here in the old brick Court house, that was familiar to many of us during the latter part of the last century, the writer of this sketch witnessed the trial of the robbers of the Northampton National Bank. It was in this Court house that the late Daniel W. Bond displayed in the seventies and eighties those rare gifts as lawyer and jurist that resulted in his appointment to the Superior Court of Massachusetts, a position which he filled with dis-

tion for more than a score of years, or until his recent death. Four meeting houses besides the present noble structure, have stood upon this spot. Such famous preachers as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield have made the place historic by their solemn and moving discourses. As you stand in the neighborhood you can, in imagination, see passing before you the forms of certain distinguished citizens of the early days. When we consider the character of the first settlers of the place and their previous history, we are not surprised to learn that among the first things which they thought of upon their arrival was the erection of a house for the public worship of God. It was styled by them "a house for the town", which reminds us that the first meeting houses of the region were used for secular as well as religious purposes. The first meeting house, according to the plan and specifications, was to be built of "sawen" timber, twenty six feet long, eighteen feet wide, and nine feet in the clear. That it was regarded as a building of special importance is indicated by the fact that it was to be built of sawn timber, which was prepared by hand,\*involving a large amount of hard labor. The houses of the settlers at the time were made of rough logs.

In the course of seven years the meeting house became too small for the increased congregations and, July 12, 1661, the town voted to erect a new meeting house. This second house stood, as did the first, on "Meeting House Hill" and was forty feet square. The old house was used for school purposes until 1663. The roof of the new church rose in pyramidal form to a point in the center and was surmounted by a "turret". No bell was used for many years, but the people were called to worship by the beating of a drum, or the blowing of a trumpet. Whether or not the trumpet

was sounded at times from the turret does not appear.

This second meeting house, in size and appearance, resembled the meeting houses used at the time in Hatfield, West Springfield, Wethersfield and some other valley towns. In June 1664 it was voted that the house be "decently seated". No services of dedication appear to have been held at the completion of the building and it is quite probable that a town meeting may have been held in it before it was used for a religious service.

In the seating of the people the principle followed was the opposite of that involved in a Christian democracy. Families were assigned seats in the house of worship according to the rank and dignity accorded to them in the community.

This second meeting house had a door facing south and four windows in each side. The pulpit probably stood opposite the door. The house was not fully provided with pews for fifty years after its erection and galleries were not added for many years. After the Indian raid on Hatfield in 1667 the house was fortified by a line of palisades, which enclosed it on the four sides. In 1682 a move was made to purchase a bell. The bell was duly obtained and continued to do service for about three quarters of a century.

It was in this house that Edwards was preaching at the time the first great revival occurred under his labors, when some three hundred members were added to the church. Sunday, March 13, 1737, occurred in this building the accident to which reference is so frequently made in histories of the time. According to the tradition, Edwards had taken for his text, "Behold ye despisers, wonder and perish", and was well through his introductory remarks, when the gallery fell with a fearful crash, creating consternation in the congregation



THIRD MEETING HOUSE—ERECTED 1737.



and giving terrifying emphasis to the preacher's solemn words. The framework of the gallery and its occupants fell upon the people seated beneath, but fortunately no one was seriously injured. One naturally infers that this accident hastened the erection of a new house of worship.

The old meeting house, after having stood for over seventy years, had become weak and was too small for the congregation. In 1735 the town voted by a large majority to erect a new house of worship. This structure was seventy feet long, forty six feet wide, and had a steeple at the end.

A committee was appointed to view several well known meeting houses and prepare a design for the new edifice. The new structure resembled meeting houses standing at the time in Boston, Springfield, Hartford, and Longmeadow. It stood in the present highway about in line with the center doorway of the present house of worship. The steeple was at the east end. The frame of the house was erected in the fall of 1736, but the steeple was not built until a little later. Seventy six men were employed in the work a part or the whole of five days. It is recorded that forty nine gallons of rum were required to get the timbers in place and that in the construction of the building, including the raising of the frame, sixty nine gallons of rum, several barrels of "cyder" and a number of barrels of beer were consumed. The spire was raised July 21, 1737. The old meeting house was pulled down May 5, 1738. A porch was placed on the west entrance of the new house in 1764 and one over the south entrance in 1768. There is allusion to a clock being in the steeple as early as 1740. The house was used for the first time in 1738, but was not wholly completed until the next year. It was in this church that Edwards was preaching when the Great Awakening

began. George Whitefield visited Northampton in 1740 and preached in this house. This building was the scene of the closing labors of Edwards in Northampton and his dismissal in 1750. July 1, 1750, he preached his farewell discourse. Did the Lord manifest his disapproval of the dismissal of Edwards from Northampton when in the summer of the following year the meeting house was struck by lightning? The bolt struck the weather-cock and ran down the spire and tower to the ground. A new weather-cock was purchased to take the place of the one destroyed by lightning. This house closely resembled the house of worship in Farmington, Connecticut. There was a side to the character of Jonathan Edwards that has been too little recognized by the world at large. One of his biographers has well described him as America's greatest saint. The man who on his death bed could send to his wife the well known message, "Give my kindest love to my dear wife and tell her that the uncommon union which has long subsisted between us has been of such a nature as I trust is spiritual, and therefore will continue forever", was surely a good husband, as well as a profound thinker.

This third house of worship, like its predecessor, stood for about three quarters of a century. The accompanying illustration is said to be a good representation of the structure and was made from a sketch drawn by William F. Pratt, architect, about forty years ago.

When the time came to erect the fourth meeting house, the noble edifice so familiar to the older people of to-day, the increased wealth and general resources of the period made it possible to build a house of worship of beautiful design and stately proportions. There was brought from New York the architect Captain Isaac Damon, then in his twenty eighth year.



JONATHAN EDWARDS





He had studied architecture under Ithiel Towne of New York. He was engaged to make the plans and direct the building of the new house. The church in Northampton was the first independent work in church building done by Captain Damon. He afterwards built a dozen more churches in the region. It is interesting to note that he made a specialty of bridge building and built nearly all of the bridges that were constructed in the early part of the nineteenth century over the Connecticut river and several of those that spanned the Penobscot, the Mohawk, the Hudson, and the Ohio rivers.

The church in Northampton built by Captain Damon was completed in 1812. It was at the time the most elaborate house of worship in western Massachusetts. It had a seating capacity of nearly two thousand people and was in excellent condition when it was unfortunately destroyed by fire in the afternoon of June 27, 1876. The accompanying illustration is from a sketch made by the architect, Mr. G. C. Gardner of Springfield.

Rev. Solomon Williams, whose ministry extended over a period of fifty six years, was pastor at the time the fourth meeting house was erected. The church has received into its membership in the course of its history about five thousand persons.

In response to a letter of inquiry directed to Mr. Christopher Clarke, of Northampton, now in his eighty fifth year, the writer of this sketch received the following interesting letter:

Northampton, Mass., January 6, 1911.  
My Dear Mr. Wight:

I have your letter of the 5th and would say in regard to the First Church building destroyed by fire in 1876, that it had a most beautiful interior construction. The fine pulpit was of the high old fashion-

ed sort with steps ascending to it on both sides curving from the platform where the communion table stood. The galleries were extended on both sides of the church from the organ gallery, with three rows of pews and seats, and gave ample room with the large body pews for the seating of about seventeen hundred persons. It was the largest church at the time in the state. The columns that supported the galleries were beautifully carved, and the ceiling was very ornate in construction, rising almost like a dome from sides to the center, from which a large and beautiful chandelier was hung.

This church up to 1826 was the only one in the town, and the first church to be built after that year was the Second Congregational (Unitarian), which was also destroyed by fire a few years ago.

You speak of Jenny Lind coming to sing in Northampton. I was the man who brought her here, guaranteeing with two other persons \$3,000, in order to secure the engagement. She sang in the First Church the evening of July 3, 1851, the sale of tickets amounting to \$4,500. In the spring of 1852 she gave a second concert at the Town Hall in Northampton for the benefit of the Young Men's Institute and local charity. Soon after her first concert in Northampton she married Otto Goldschmidt, her piano accompanist, and they resided on Round Hill, Northampton, until the spring of 1852, when they returned to Germany.

In regard to the Court House, it was built of brick and had a small bell tower, and a bell that was rung for many years to call the court together.

Very truly,

Christopher Clarke.

Rev. Henry T. Rose, D. D., the present pastor of the First Church, in reply to a letter of inquiry from



INTERIOR OF OLD FIRST CHURCH SOMETIME BEFORE  
IT WAS BURNT



the writer, says: "I am happy to give attention to the questions in your letter of January 5th in regard to Northampton meeting houses.

It is a historic fact that the gallery fell in the second meeting house, during a sermon by Mr. Edwards. The date was a Sunday in March, 1737. Edwards had just 'laid down his doctrine' from the text, 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish,' when the front gallery fell. Something like two hundred and fifty persons were seated in the gallery, or under it, but by a special providence, it seemed to Edwards, no one was killed, or even had a bone broken, and only ten were hurt, 'so as to make any great matter of it'. The catastrophe hastened the completion of the new meeting house, the third already underway.

George Whitefield visited Northampton in October, 1740. 'He preached here,' says Mr. Edwards, 'four sermons in the meeting house (besides a private lecture in my house), one on Friday, another on Saturday, and two on the Sabbath. The congregation was extraordinarily melted by every sermon, almost the whole assembly being in tears for a great part of sermon time'. It is improbable that David Brainerd ever preached here. If he ever did it was during the absence of Mr. Edwards. For in his funeral sermon, published in his works, Vol. III, 'True Saints, when absent from the body, are present with the Lord,'—preached October 12, 1747, he says of Brainerd, 'He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit. I never had opportunity to hear him preach, but have often heard him pray'. It is not likely that Brainerd was strong enough to preach after reaching Northampton, for Edwards says, 'When Mr. Brainerd came hither, he had so much strength as to be able from day to day to ride out two or three miles and to return, and sometimes to pray in the family; but from this time he gradually but quickly

decayed and became weaker and weaker.' Edwards says, 'His funeral was attended by eight of the neighboring ministers and seventeen other gentlemen of liberal education, and a great concourse of people'".

The Marquis Lafayette, when in Northampton in 1825, was taken to the meeting house of the First Church and introduced to a large company of ladies. Henry Clay, who visited Northampton in 1833, attended worship in the church. In 1852 the Hungarian orator and patriot, Louis Kossuth, addressed a great concourse of people in the church.

The present handsome brown stone structure was erected immediately after the burning of the fourth meeting house in 1876. Its ivy covered walls are one of the beautiful sights of Northampton in the summer season.

The Second Congregational Church (Unitarian), sometimes called in former times "The Church of the Three Judges", was formed from a liberal element in the First Church, February 22, 1825, and a house of worship built and dedicated that year. The church was composed of such leading citizens of Northampton as Judge Joseph Lyman, Judge Samuel Howe, head of the law school, Judge Samuel Hinckly, Judge Samuel F. Lyman, Judge Charles E. Forbes, George Bancroft, the historian, Judge Charles P. Huntington, Samuel Clarke, Christopher Clarke, father of the present Christopher Clarke, and their families. The first boy baptized in the church was Christopher Clarke now in the eighty fifth year of his age.

The loss of so many of the leading members of its only church stirred the town to the depths.

The covenant under which the church was organized in 1825, is quite unique and strictly Congregational in its simplicity. It is worded as follows:



**ELM SET OUT BY JONATHAN EDWARDS IN 1730**





UNITARIAN CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

**"We disciples of Jesus Christ, having a firm belief in his religion, and desiring to receive the benefit of its ordinances, do hereby engage to walk together as a Christian Church in the faith and order of the Gospel; praying that we may be able to strengthen the bonds of mutual love and Christian fellowship; to animate one another in the path of duty; to become confirmed in the knowledge and practice of the truth; and in the fear and love of God to seek the pardon of our sins, and the gift of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen".**

The first house of worship built by the Unitarian society was of wood and was destroyed by fire June 7, 1903. The present brick structure was designed by Kirkham and Parlett, of Springfield, Massachusetts, and is of the same general style as the former house. The interior is marvelously beautiful, being of the Roman and Grecian ornate style of architecture, the most perfect example of its class in the state. The exterior with its plain but dignified appearance is an appropriate symbol of the simplicity of the church's covenant of faith.

The minister of the church, Rev. Henry G. Smith, D. D., writes; "The interior of the church is finished harmoniously in the classic style, with pilasters and cornice. At the pulpit end, columns, with composite capitals, emphasize the character of the architecture, and at the gallery end of the church the organ frame carries out the general architectural scheme very symmetrically. The pulpit is of graceful outline with the double stairway. Four memorial windows of exceptional beauty are prominent on the sides. The lighting of the church is mainly by the indirect method, the electric lights being hidden behind the cornice and illuminating from the cove".

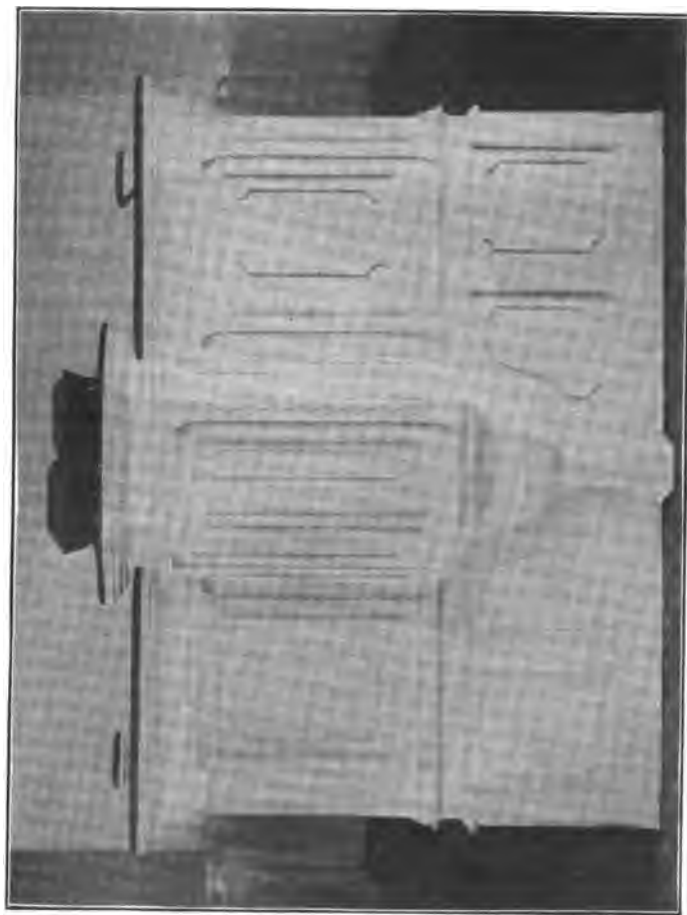
In 1833 the Old First saw a considerable number of persons, described as "an element more demonstrative in its religious zeal than the majority of the members", withdraw from its membership and, adopting for their "banner of conservatism the celebrated name of Jonathan Edwards", organize the Edwards Congregational church. The first pastor of the Edwards church was Rev. John Todd, famous as the author of the "Student's Manual".

Referring to the halftone of Edwards which accompanies this sketch, it is to be said that the original picture was painted at Boston about 1740 by John Smybert, an artist of reputation, who came to America with Bishop Berkley in 1728. In 1828 Rembrandt Peale, of Philadelphia, copied this portrait. The halftone is from a photographic copy of an engraving of the Peale painting made by Emily Sartain of Philadelphia. The picture is believed to be a good likeness of Edwards.

President Dwight, in his "Travels in New England and New York," writing of his visit to Northampton, says: "Probably no people were ever more punctual in their attendance on public worship than they were for one hundred and thirty years from the first settlement. Fourteen hundred and sixty persons were once counted in the church on a Sabbath afternoon, amounting to five sixths of the inhabitants."







THE COLRAIN PULPIT. 1795



## The Colrain Pulpit

**I**N a letter addressed to the writer, dated January 20, 1911, Mr. Lorenzo Griswold of Griswoldville, Massachusetts, gives the following information about the old pulpit an illustration of which appears with this sketch: "The meeting house in which our beautiful Colonial pulpit was built was erected in 1795. The pulpit was made, we suppose, at that time, and is consequently, one hundred and sixteen years old. It was made by Mr. Jesse Lyons, of Colrain, who died in 1830. The church in which this pulpit stood was built on the west side of North River, about half a mile north west of 'Colrain City,' as it is called. The pulpit is now in the brick Congregational Church at Colrain City, built in 1834. The old church was taken down at that time and some of its timbers used in the new building. The old pulpit was used in the Town Hall, in the lower story of the church, for seventy years as the moderator's desk, but in 1904 it was taken up stairs into the audience room, repainted white and rededicated. It is wholly as it was when it was made, no change having been made. There was simply a replacing of posts broken or decayed. From this pulpit 'Priest Taggart' delivered a eulogy on George Washington immediately after his death, and all the boys of the town marched to the church with black feathers in their caps." Mr. Griswold modestly refrains from stating that it was through his interest in the old pulpit and his generosity that it was repaired in 1904 and placed in its present home. Roswell F. Putman, Northampton, Massachusetts, was the architect who reinstated some of the old lines and lost parts of the pulpit.







FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 1819



## The First Church of Christ Springfield, Massachusetts

**T**HE following lines were written by Miss I. F. Farrar, of Springfield, and express the feelings of a great multitude of people who have known and loved the old First Church :

"How dear to our hearts is the scene of our church home,  
When fond recollection presents it to view;  
The white pillared entrance, the greensward before it,  
And all the fine elms which our infancy knew.  
The court house beside it, the city hall nigh it;  
The bright sparkling stream flowing swiftly so near;  
The sound old First church with a fair record held fast,  
The dear old First church—many years may she last.

How dear to our hearts is the old First church rooster,  
When near or when far he's presented to view;  
For years he has stood there with never a murmur,  
And never a whisper of tales that he knew;  
How much he has seen from the top of the steeple,  
So true to his post as the seer of the church;  
The bright shining rooster, the patient old rooster,  
The dear faithful rooster that ne'er leaves his perch".

No one who has looked with care about Springfield in the last ninety years has failed to observe the fine Colonial house of worship, standing just west of Court Square in the heart of the city. It is an impressive monument to its builders, the men and women who belonged to the First Church a century ago, and reflects great credit upon the architect, Isaac Damon, whose design was followed in its construction. At present it is an object of love and admiration to multitudes of people living in and about Springfield. It is the hope of the writer that if modern improvements encroach upon the land now occupied by the old church some pro-

vision may be made for its preservation. It seems easier to be worshipful in such a home with its associations than in some of our modern churches.

"Wee intend, by God's grace, as soon as we can, with all convenient speede, to procure some Godly and faithfull minister, with whome we purpose to joyne in church covenant to walk in all the ways of Christ". These words, the first article of an agreement, bearing date May 14, 1636, made by the first settlers of Springfield, are an eloquent expression of the spirit of the men whom William Pynchon, the friend of John Winthrop, led through the wilderness from Roxbury to establish a new plantation in the fertile valley of the Connecticut river.

The first meeting house in Springfield was erected in 1645 and stood near the south east corner of Court Square.

The Honorable Henry Morris, describing the structure in an address delivered in Springfield, June 22, 1875, said: "This meeting house was forty feet long and twenty five feet wide, and faced south, on the one rod road, leading to the training field and burial ground, since made wider and called Elm street. It had two large windows on each side, and one smaller one at each end; it had a shingled roof—a rare thing in that day—and two turrets, one designed for a bell, the other for a watch tower".

For a little more than three decades this building stood as a witness to the zeal of the first settlers of the town for the public worship of God. Among the worshipers in this house was Deacon Samuel Chapin, whose heroic figure in bronze, representing the Puritan character, stands in the heart of the city which he helped to found.

On the terrible day in 1675 when the Indians attacked the settlement and destroyed many houses





**THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE.**

and much property, the meeting house, which was fortified, narrowly escaped destruction. In 1677 it was taken down and the second house of worship erected near the south west angle of Court Square. This was a much larger and more commodious building than the first. Rev. Robert Breck, over whose settlement as pastor there was a long and bitter controversy, but whose pastorate extended over a period of forty nine years, or until his death, preached in this second house of worship for the first seventeen years of his ministry.

It was not until after seventy five years of service that this second meeting house gave place in 1752 to the third structure, the immediate predecessor of the present beautiful house of worship. The third house stood directly east of the ground occupied by the present building and was more pretentious than its predecessors, being sixty feet long, forty six feet wide, and twenty six feet high between joints. The main entrance was on the east side, but there was also an entrance through the tower. It had a high pulpit and square pews. In the tower was a clock and the tapering spire was surmounted by the copper weathercock, which in the present day looks down from its elevated perch upon the busy scenes in the streets below.

In an article printed in a local paper many years ago the following sketch of the third meeting house was given: "Beyond the sheds (standing partly on Elm street and partly on the south west corner of the present Court square) stood the church, holding on the finger of its steeple the same golden rooster that to-day wags his thin tail in all weathers. The church, at this time, some 25 years old, was 60 feet by 46, with a tower on the lane, but the main entrance toward the east. The seats were square, and the pulpit high, extending over the deacon seats, which faced the con-



gregation. Above was a ponderous sounding board, and nervous people used to fear, during sermon time, that the sounding board would fall into the pulpit, and that on to the deacons below. The deacon's hat is spoken of by old people as a peculiar insignia of office, which, with powdered hair, made them look venerable enough. The broad galleries held as many as the body seats, and in a back and high corner, nearest the shingles, the colored people took their religion, which may suggest the origin of our 'nigger heaven.' Twenty five years before, the Chinese wall through the congregation, dividing males and females, was broken down, but it took all the wisdom the selectmen and deacons could command to assign the seats 'either higher or lower as they should judge most mete.' The meeting house was not warmed in those days, and the preacher often pointed to the ceiling with his big worsted mitten, while the women used foot stones and everybody else knocked heel against heel."

The building of this third house of worship was an important event in the ministry of Mr. Breck, who preached from its pulpit until his death in 1784. It was while the congregation was worshiping in this house that the Rev. Samuel Osgood, began his pastorate of forty five years of active service and almost a decade more of pastoral relation.

The beautiful Colonial structure, which now stands west of Court Square, was erected in 1819. Isaac Damon, the builder of bridges, who had a few years before designed and built in Northampton the largest and most elaborate church in western Massachusetts, was engaged as architect of the new house in Springfield. The writer has been unable to ascertain where Damon obtained his design for the Springfield church. The exterior is very unlike that of the church he built in Northampton, but bears



**THIRD MEETING HOUSE. 1752**



a striking resemblance to certain old houses of worship, which were standing at the time in eastern Massachusetts, and also to St. Michael's church, Charleston, South Carolina, which was built in 1761.

The interior of the church was patterned after the interior of the Northampton house. Doubtless Damon looked about and followed other designs, with modifications of his own devising. It may be seen from the accompanying illustration that the house is a fine example of the Colonial building. It is well proportioned, a fact not true of the church in Charleston, South Carolina, which Damon may have had in mind. The portico, with its Ionic columns and other ornamentations, is very beautiful, especially when seen in the moonlight. The tower with its several forms is of right proportions and makes an impressive appearance. It would be more effective as a work of architecture if it were more highly ornamented. A well known architect recently said to the writer, "I never see the tower of the First Church without wishing that they would allow me to finish it." The implied criticism is just. An examination of the spire of St. Michael's church in Charleston, South Carolina, made by the writer, shows how the spire of the First Church might have been greatly improved in appearance. Probably the people at the time did not have sufficient means to carry out the architect's ideas. Damon certainly knew how to make his churches most elaborate and beautiful. A glance at the picture of the church he built in Northampton furnishes proof of this.

Some inquiries regarding the interior features of the First Church meeting house called forth the following response from Rev. Henry M. Parsons, D. D., Toronto, Canada, who was pastor of the church from 1854 to 1870: "The rumor concerning Jenny Lind, who sang in the church at her concert in the city, is

doubtless true. She said after her concert, that the auditorium for its acoustic properties, was the finest she had used in all her concerts in America. The highest note and the lowest whisper can be heard with equal clearness in every part of the room.

The dimensions of the room and the concave ceiling contribute to this result. The room is seventy feet square, and the concave circular ceiling is seven and a half feet deep in the center. The ceiling is sustained by pickets from the framework, fastened to the rafters of the roof above. Where Mr. Damon obtained his patterns for the church and why his plan differed from that of the Northampton house, I do not know. The weathercock on the top of the spire was undoubtedly to remind the church of Peter's warning and constitute a call to repentance."

The gallery, which extends around three sides of the church, is very spacious and is supported by eighteen beautiful Ionic columns. On the platform in front of the pulpit is a beautiful communion table, purchased in Boston about 1818; also a fine old chair, known as the Osgood chair, in use before Dr. Osgood began his pastorate in 1809. The church has some rare old communion pieces, which are kept in a safe place and are highly prized.

Miss I. F. Farrar has written of the First Church rooster: "The city's oldest inhabitant is probably the First Church rooster. He arrived in town over 150 years ago. He is a much larger bird than one would think at first sight, measuring four feet from tail to beak and weighing 49 pounds. A few papers and records are stored with him for safe keeping.

If he would only speak, many a tale would he have to tell. He watched the first President roll up the river road in his coach and four and enter Parson's tavern, now no more. He saw the troops form which



ROOSTER AND OSGOOD CHAIR



should represent Springfield in the Revolutionary war, the war of 1812, the Civil war and the Spanish war. He watched the steamboats ply between Hartford and Springfield when there were no falls to bar the way. He saw the ferries move slowly from the Agawam to the Springfield meadows, conveying the people to church, the only church for miles around. He heard the long discussions over the feasibility of building a bridge over the Connecticut, when the old men shook their heads and said: 'You might as well try to bridge the Atlantic ocean!' He sighs over the change from the six-horse coaches rolling in from Albany and Boston, discharging their loads of gentles and ladies in wigs and ruffles and buckles, to the automobiles of today, whizzing by with their occupants so disguised in goggles, linen dusters and rubber suits that he sometimes wonders what those creatures are! He has gazed calmly down on all sorts of doings on Court square, from the whipping-post of early days to the popcorn venders of the last band concert. He guarded the body of John Quincy Adams, lying in state in the church below him; he listened to the silvery notes of Jenny Lind in the same church. He saw Charles Dickens sail down our river.

Not only could he tell tales of our own fair city, but he is a traveled rooster, having crossed the water from his home in England in company with two others who have kept the faith on the Old South in Boston and the First church in Newburyport.

In spite of his great age (for he alighted on the grandfather of the present edifice) our friend keeps perennially young. Years ago he found the fountain of youth, which early explorers sought for long in vain, and by an occasional dip in that fountain is as fresh as he appeared in 1750."



Rev. F. L. Goodspeed, D. D., kindly sent the following letter to the writer :

January 27, 1911.

My dear Mr. Wight :

I am glad you are writing up the old churches. They are worthy of it. The old First Church of Springfield ought to be of imperishable interest to the community, but I fear it must soon give way to the modern craze of newness and commercialism.

I suppose you have recorded in your book the memorable scenes which the old building has witnessed. On March 9, 1848, the body of John Quincy Adams lay in state there. On July 1, 1851, it was crowded to hear Jenny Lind sing, accompanied by Mr. Goldschmidt, who later became her husband. You will find an account of it all in the Republican for July 2, 1851. Saturday, April 24, 1854, Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, delivered a long speech from that pulpit. You will find a full account in the Republican of the time. I venture to say you have all this and much more; John Brown also, and all the rest.

To me, who put in fourteen of the best years of my life there, of course the place is hallowed forever. The faces of men like William H. Haile seem to look out from the walls. It is well you are putting its history and description into permanent form, for the church itself will soon be gone. It was a pleasant audience room, with good lines, and the acoustic properties were perfect. How some of the older ones mourned when the "ginger cookies" in the decoration gave way to the new ceiling now there! What memories cluster about the place from foundation stones up to the historic rooster at the apex of the spire!

Cordially yours,

F. L. Goodspeed.

The "ginger cookies" referred to in Dr. Goodspeed's letter, an illustration of which accompanies this sketch, constituted the decoration that formerly extended around the circumference of the concave ceiling. The illustration was made from a photograph of a model still preserved in the tower of the church. The decoration of the main portion of the ceiling was a clouded sky with stars shining through the interstices. To the front of the gallery opposite the pulpit platform is attached a fine old circular clock, bearing on its dial the inscription, "A bequest to the First Parish in Springfield by Edward Pynchon, Esq., 1830."

As early as 1826 a company of missionaries were ordained in this church for service in foreign lands, and some of the best known foreign missionaries in the last century went out from this church. It is evident that the missionary spirit was strong among its members. Rev. S. H. Calhoun, a member of the First Church, who went to Smyrna in 1837 as a missionary, wrote just before his death, "Deeper and deeper has become my conviction that the work of foreign missions is the great mission of Christ's church, and that it can be neglected by no organization or individual without personal loss."

Mrs. R. N. Hume, who was married to Mr. Hume in the old White Church in West Springfield and went with him to Bombay, returned to Springfield with her six children after her husband's death. She united with the First Church, and became a teacher in the Sunday school. Her children, among whom were the now distinguished Robert A. Hume, D. D., and his brother Edward, were members of the Sunday school.

During the pastorate of Rev. Samuel Osgood, D. D., 1809 to 1854, twelve hundred and fifty seven members were added to the church. Dr. Osgood was a conductor of the Springfield branch of the famous

under ground railroad, by means of which a large number of slaves, fleeing from their Southern masters, escaped to Canada and freedom. As many as fifty were entertained in one year in Dr. Osgood's home.

Rev. Edward A. Reed, D. D., now the beloved pastor of the Second Congregational church of Holyoke, Massachusetts, was pastor of the First Church from 1871 to 1878, a period of notable spiritual progress in the history of the church.

The Sunday school of the church was organized in 1818, and mid-week services were begun a little later. In 1834, Dr. Osgood was earnestly advocating total abstinence.

The present organ was built and installed in 1881, a projection having been built for it at the west end of the church. The organ contained fifty stops, twenty three hundred and eleven pipes and nine pedal movements. It was first exhibited to the public December 5, 1881.

The high pulpit of the church was first lowered in 1854. It is of interest to note that the standard of the telescope in use at the summit house on Mount Holyoke was made of wood taken from the old pulpit.

Some of the oldest members of the church have been heard to say that in their younger days, when interest in the sermon flagged, they were accustomed to direct their attention to the upper part of the church, and occupy the time in counting the "cookies" that extended in an almost endless number around the circumference of the concave ceiling.

The Rev. Neil McPherson, D. D., was installed as pastor of the First Church, January 2, 1911.



THE GINGER COOKIES



## The Old Square Pew of the Ludlow Church

**O**NE of the first steps taken by the town of Ludlow, Massachusetts, was the appointment in town meeting of a committee to set "a stake upon a meeting house lot." The first houses in the town were erected about 1750, but it was not until after the close of the war of the Revolution that the resources of the people warranted the building of a meeting house. Then again a "stake" was set upon a site for a house of worship and measures adopted for building the house. In the records of the town we read: "October 23, 1783. Town meeting at the stake. Voted that the building committee procure a sufficient quantity of rum for raising the meeting house frame."

The raising of the great frame of the meeting house in that day was an exciting event, the entire community, men and women, old and young, joining in the work. Strong armed men came from towns around to lend their assistance. From a perusal of the records of the time one receives the impression that the raising of the meeting house in the various settlements of the Connecticut valley was an event attended with much cheerfulness and jollity. For the women and girls there was work to be done in the preparation of food and spreading of tables, much food, as well as considerable drink, being required for the occasion.

The meeting house which was raised in 1783, owing to the poverty of the people, was not finished until 1795. A carpenter's bench sufficed for a pulpit and rough planks placed upon blocks did service as

pews. A high pulpit, "perched like an eagle's nest far up some dizzy height," was built later and square pews took the place of the rude seats of the first years.

At the organization of the church in 1789 a heavy communion service was presented by the mother town, upon which was inscribed, "Springfield 1st Church, 1742."

In reply to a letter of inquiry regarding the square pew, which is still preserved in the original house of worship, the present minister of the church, Rev. John S. Curtis, says: "The pew no doubt dates back nearly to the year of the raising of the meeting house. The original house still stands. It is owned by the town and used as a hall."

The second meeting house of the First Church was erected in 1840 and has been described by a former resident of Ludlow, Rev. J. W. Tuck, as "a comely building." It had a tall spire. This house shared the fate of many of the old frame meeting houses, having been destroyed by fire January 15, 1859. Only the foundation stones and the topmost ball of the spire escaped consumption by the raging flames.

The house of worship, now standing on the common, loved by the people of Ludlow and admired by visitors, is the successor of the house burnt in 1859, and was promptly erected in that year.

There are some quaint epitaphs in the cemeteries in the town of Ludlow. One in the East yard reads:

"Return my friends without a tear  
Devote your life unto God's fear:  
That you with him may always live  
This is the last advice I give."

One infers from epitaphs found in the old cemeteries of the land that once men and women thought it their duty, when dying, to give the best advice they



OLD SQUARE PEW, LUDLOW, MASS.





knew of to the friends left behind. An epitaph in the old Center yard reads :

"In memory of Doc. Philip Lyon, who died July 26, 1802, aged 40 years. Who after having experienced the sweets of connubial bliss died leaving no family. His amiable consort died at Randolph, Oct. 1801."

An epitaph in the Center yard reads :

"Praises on tombs are  
titles vainly spent,  
A man's good name is  
his best monument."

Another in the North yard reads :

"The longest life must have  
an end  
Therefore beware how  
time you spend."

Dr. O. W. Stoughton, of Ludlow, kindly took the photograph from which the accompanying illustration of the old pew was made.



## **The First Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut**

**T**HE Dutch, who ascended the Connecticut river and in 1633 purchased a tract of land of the Pequots, where the city of Hartford is now situated, thus endeavoring to gain a foothold in the territory, were actuated by political and commerical motives, and made no effort to establish the institutions of religion or build a house of worship in the region.

Not so in the case of Rev. Thomas Hooker, Rev. Samuel Stone, Mr. William Goodwin, and their companions, who came from Newtown in the summer of 1636 to establish a plantation below Agawam in the Connecticut valley.

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice," is a passage that has most appropriate application to Mr. Hooker and his companions. Their first thought was of the church and its institutions and their arrival may be said to mark the beginning of organized Christianity in Hartford. They built their church edifice on "Meeting House Yard," land now known as State House Square. The edifice was, of course, a temporary structure; while the exact date of its erection is uncertain, the house was in use from 1635 to 1641. By vote of the town a guard of men was provided "to attend with their arms fixed, and 2 shote of powder and shott, at least upon every publique meeting for religious use."

In 1640 or 1641 the first meeting house was given by the town to Mr. Hooker for a barn and a new house was erected upon the eastern side of Meeting House Yard.

A perusal of the records of the period leads to the conclusion that work on the second meeting house was begun in 1638 and the edifice completed in 1641. The new house was used for about a century.

In notes about meeting houses of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Hartford, Mr. C. J. Hoadly gives the following description of the second meeting house: "The pulpit was on the west side. The building was nearly square, with a high roof, in the center of which was a turret where hung the bell, brought by the settlers, doubtless from Newtown, now Cambridge, and placed in the turret when the edifice was first erected. There was a door on the north side, perhaps also other doors, and near by a horse block for the accommodation of those who lived so far off that they must ride. The chamber over the porch perhaps served as the arsenal for town and colony, as a room in the south church did in later times. The windows were small and the glass set in lead. Stairs from the interior led up to galleries on the south and east sides."

By the time of the ordination of the Rev. Daniel Wadsworth as pastor of the church in 1732 the old house of worship had become inadequate and was constantly in need of repairs. A movement was begun for building a new meeting house. However, eleven years were required to determine the site of the new edifice, and work on the structure did not begin until June 20, 1737. The General Assembly fixed the situation of the house on "the south east part of the burying lot in Hartford, with part of Capt. Nathaniel Hooker's lot adjoining thereto." The plan of the house was made by Cotton Palmer, of Warwick, Rhode Island. About a week was required for the raising of the frame of the new house. Considerable quantities of cider and rum were consumed by those employed in the raising. The house, including the steeple, was



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, HARTFORD



practically finished by the end of 1739. It stood sidewise to the street. The steeple, which was surmounted by a gilded cock and ball, stood on the north end. The pulpit, which was on the west side, "arose to an altitude easily commanding every foot of the surrounding galleries, and was furnished with an imposing canopy or sounding board and the handsome window hangings behind."

The house was dedicated December 30, 1739, Rev. Daniel Wadsworth preaching the sermon from Haggai 2 : 9 ;—"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts." Rev. George Whitefield visited Hartford in 1740 and preached to a vast throng of people in the new house of worship.

Near the close of 1804 a committee was appointed by the society to consider the matter of building a new edifice, the house dedicated in 1739 having become "scanty and dilapidated." March 22, 1805, this committee made a favorable report and steps were at once taken to secure funds for the new building. The old house was sold December 2, 1805, and work on the foundation of the new edifice was begun March 6, 1806. The site of the new house was substantially the same as that of the old. George Leon Walker, in his "History of the First Church in Hartford," referring to the building of the fourth meeting house of the society, says : "The work progressed with vigor, and with some alcoholic aid after the fashion of the times, and the month of December, 1807, saw the congregation ready to remove from the theatre in Theatre street (now Temple), where they had worshipped in the interim between the two meeting houses."

The house was dedicated December 3, 1807, the occasion and the fame of the pastor, Dr. Nathan Strong, who preached the dedicatory sermon, attracting



a great concourse of people from Hartford and neighboring towns. There were square pews in parts of this fourth house. The high pulpit was supported by fluted columns and ascended by spiral stairs. Stoves were not used in this house until 1815.

President Timothy Dwight who visited Hartford in September, 1820, in his "Travels" thus described the new house of worship: "The Church belonging to the first Congregation is one of the handsomest buildings in the state. It is sixty four feet in front, forty feet high, and one hundred in length, exclusive of the portico. All of the columns which decorate the building are Ionic, and of wood. The ceiling within rests upon eight columns, which are fluted. The pulpit is of varnished wood, resembling light colored mahogany, standing on fluted columns. The ascent to it is by a circular flight of stairs on each side. On the outside of the building six steps of dark brown free-stone extend throughout the whole front, including the portico, which projects sixteen feet and is forty long, and consists of eight columns; four in front; and the four corresponding ones against the wall support the inner entablature. Behind the portico rises the brick tower to the height of seventy feet. The remaining part of the tower is of wood, of three distinct stories; each surmounted by a balustrade. The first of these stories, contains the bell; is square, and finished with twelve columns; three at each angle. The second is an octagon, with sixteen columns, clustering so closely around it as to admit of no other ornament. The third is also an octagon, with a column at each angle; but the spaces between them are yet unoccupied by appropriate decorations. Upon the pedestals, corresponding to all the columns, are urns or acorn shaped balls; except over the group of sixteen, where two pedestals are with urns, and two without, alternately. The ap-



INTERIOR OF FIRST CHURCH



FIRST CHURCH PARISH HOUSE

pearance of the whole is incomplete, from it not being finished with a lofty spire, but terminating in a low octagon, like the upright part of a drum light, crowned with urns surrounding the shaft, bells, and rod common to most churches. The whole height to the vane is one hundred and sixty five feet."

A glance at the picture of the exterior of the church, accompanying this sketch, will show that the edifice now standing is the one President Dwight described in his "Travels." He was surely an observing traveler and a rather exacting critic of what he saw. He plainly stated, however, that he regarded the meeting house in Hartford as a beautiful structure, if not perfect in all its parts.

Rev. Nathan Strong, who was ordained pastor of the church January 5, 1774, and who preached the sermon at the dedication of the new house of worship, December, 1807, continued as pastor until his death, December 24, 1816, in the forty third year of his ministry over the church. The high pulpit, whose elevation had been determined by Dr. Strong, was lowered once in 1816. In 1835 both galleries and pulpit were lowered, the galleries nearly five feet and the pulpit an uncertain distance. In 1839 carpets were put into the aisles for the first time and in 1845 furnaces were substituted for stoves. The present bell, which is "supposed to contain in it material of its predecessors, inclusive of the old Newtown bell of 1632," was purchased by virtue of a vote passed in January, 1850. In 1852 the old pulpit was taken out and a new one placed in a recess built for it; the square pews were removed and slips placed in every part of the building; changes were made in the windows at the sides of the house and those in the west end closed up; gas fixtures were procured and "a new arch thrown over the center of the audience room between the supporting columns,"

the building being "brought to substantially its present interior aspect."

The evidence seems to show that Daniel Wadsworth, "the Maecenas of Hartford," made the original plan for the present house of worship. Prior to the erection of this edifice the meeting house in Wethersfield, built in 1761, was the finest meeting house in the colony.

Returning to the founders of the First Church of Hartford, Rev. Thomas Hooker and his companions, it can truly be said of these men that they were not merely the founders of a church but also the builders of a free commonwealth. American democracy was born when Hooker in his memorable sermon said, "The foundation of authority is laid firstly, in the free consent of the people."

It is interesting to note that the building of the present meeting house of the First Church antedates the organization of the American Board of Foreign Missions. Not until more than ten years after this house was built was a Sunday school organized in Hartford.

The beautiful and costly parish house of the First Church was opened November 19, 1909. It is a replica of the interior of the church. The story of its origin and construction is set forth in the following inscription:

"In Memory of Francis Buell Cooley this site was secured and this house was erected by The First Church of Christ in Hartford from the gift of his family, Mrs. Francis Buell Cooley, Francis Rexford Cooley, Sarah Cooley Hall, Charles Parsons Cooley, Clara Cooley Jacobus."

Rev. Rockwell Harmon Potter, D. D., is the devoted and beloved pastor of this historic church, having been installed in 1900.

## **The Second Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut**

**I**N reply to a letter addressed by the writer to Rev. Edwin Pond Parker, D. D., pastor of the Second Church of Christ in Hartford, December 7, 1910, the following communication was received from Dr. Parker:

Hartford, December 14, 1910.

Rev. C. A. Wight,

Dear Sir:

In reply to yours of December 7, I would say:

The "Second Church of Christ in Hartford," of which I have been pastor now for 51 consecutive years, was organized in the year 1670.

It has had three meeting houses. The first one was erected sometime after 1670, probably about 1674. The second one, in 1753-4.

The third one, (our present house) was dedicated in 1827.

The interior of this house was considerably modified in 1845, and a two storied transept was built on to the rear of the church to furnish Sunday school and chapel accommodations.

In the autumn of 1909, and in view of the pastor's approaching fiftieth anniversary, the entire building, without and within, was renovated and beautifully restored to its original Colonial simplicity, at an expense of about ten thousand dollars. The mahogany pulpit, sofa, and communion table, which were in the sanctuary at its dedication, were restored to their old places and uses. In the vestibule are tablets, one inscribed with the names of the original members of

the church, the other with the names of the successive pastors. Many pieces of very old silver are still in use.

This meeting house, as it now stands, is universally admired as a singularly beautiful example of the Colonial style, and yet the name of the architect is unknown.

In the course of 240 years this church has had 10 ministers, and the average term of the pastorate is therefore 24 years.

Yours sincerely,  
Edwin P. Parker.

The house of worship, which Dr. Parker refers to in his letter as the first edifice of the Second Church, probably stood in the highway, now Main street, on the east side. In his history of the Second Church of Hartford, Dr. Parker states that this meeting house was probably a square wooden structure with a truncated pyramidal roof, similar to the "square meeting houses" common in New England in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

"Old house of Puritanic wood,  
Through whose unpainted windows streamed,  
On seats as primitive and rude  
As Jacob's pillow when he dreamed,—  
The white and undiluted day."

The second meeting house, the edifice which Dr. Parker states was erected in 1753-4, stood "in the highway, a little north of the house of Mr. Joseph Buckingham." The site was fixed by a committee of the General Assembly, the congregation having failed to agree upon a situation for the house. The highway referred to is now known as Buckingham street. Thomas Seymour, in his "Memorandum Book," made the following entry regarding this house of worship: "And the Rev. and Pious George Whitefield (provi-



SECOND CHURCH OF CHRIST, HARTFORD





dentially here) preached the first sermon that was ever preached in it, and this was on Monday, the second day of December, Anno Dom., 1754,—a good omen for a new meeting house.”

This second house of worship was constructed of wood and had three entrances, one on the east side and one at either end. There was a steeple at the north end. Like other meeting houses of the time, it was furnished within with square pews, galleries, and a high pulpit with a sounding board.

In 1825 the structure of 1753-4, standing “in the highway,” had become an obstruction to the city’s travel and traffic. It was also weakened by age, and for some time its removal had been earnestly advocated in meetings of the society. January, 1825, the society voted “to build a new meeting house and to establish a place where it shall be erected.” The site of the present house of worship was chosen.

Certificates of stock were issued to the amount of \$12,000 for the purpose of building the new house. In 1828 a further issue of stocks amounting to \$11,000 was made, a total of \$23,000. This sum included the cost of an organ and certain alterations in the structure not anticipated in the original plan.

This third house of worship was dedicated April 11, 1827. The Courant of April 16, 1827, referring to the dedicatory services, says: “The building itself is finished in elegant style, and the society deserves credit, for the laudable spirit and enterprise manifested in its erection.”

The edifice barely escaped destruction by fire July 7, 1884, only the efficient work of the firemen saving it. Alterations and repairs were made in 1873. At this time the windows were entirely renewed, a new platform and pulpit provided, the large window behind the pulpit sealed up, and the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed,

and texts of Scripture inscribed upon it. The house was painted outside and within.

An ecclesiastical council was convened in the Second Church, January 11, 1860, and at its conclusion voted to approve of Rev. Edwin Pond Parker and proceed to ordain and install him pastor of the church. The vote was not quite unanimous, Mr. Parker, in the course of the rigid and prolonged examination to which he was subjected, had let fall "a most unfortunate expression," that "God would give every man a fair chance." This expression was drawn from the candidate by certain questions relating to a possible probation after death. The proceedings of the council, the questions discussed in the course of the examination of the candidate, and the diversity of views held by the members of the council, gave rise to a somewhat prolonged and heated theological controversy in southern New England and New York. Dr. Parker's historic pastorate of more than half a century over the Second Church is ample proof of the wisdom of the council of 1860 in approving and installing him as pastor of the church.

The Rev. Rockwell Harmon Potter, D. D., minister of the First Church of Christ of Hartford, in an informal communication addressed to the writer, January 25, 1911, referring to the edifice of the Second Church, generously says: "Our meeting house, built in 1807, is not so fine as the meeting house of the Second Church built in 1820, but with this one exception I consider it the finest house of its type in New England." It is probably just to state that the two finest houses of worship built in New England between 1800 and 1850 are the meeting houses of the First and Second Churches of Christ in Hartford. These structures with their noble towers are indeed worthy of their builders, testifying as they do to the



**INTERIOR OF SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, HARTFORD**



love of the beautiful, the excellent taste, a proper sense of the dignity belonging to things devoted to the worship of God, and the heavenly aspirations, possessed by the men and women who composed the congregations of these historic churches when the present houses of worship were erected.



## The Church in Hadley, Massachusetts

**S**UMMER time in New England knows no more bewitching spot than the broad street of Hadley, where stand the old church and town hall clothed in their handsome Colonial garb. The very weathercock, perched on the steeple of the church, seems to swell with pride, as he looks down upon the beautiful scene below and meditates upon the rich historical associations of the more than two hundred and fifty years that have passed since the men from Hartford and Wethersfield built their homes at Norwottuck, afterwards by order of the General Court denominated Hadley.

Mrs. F. H. Smith of Hadley, Massachusetts, in an article written at the time of the one hundredth anniversary of the building and dedication of the present meeting house in Hadley, says: "In the latter part of the year 1661 the town voted to erect a 'meeting house to be a place of publick worship, whose figure is 45 foote in length and 24 foote in Bredth, with Leantos on both sides which shall Inlarge the whole to 36 in Bredth. This shall be scituated and sett upon the common street.' Not until 1670, when the inhabitants on the west side of the river were set apart as the town of Hatfield, was this building completed." Work on the building was begun sometime before the division of the town was made and it was placed north of the center of the common for the accommodation of the people living on the west side of the river.

Like many of the meeting houses of the region, the structure was a small square building made of logs and had a turret or belfry rising from the center



of the roof. The building stood on an elevation of the common near a small goose pond. It is said that the "squawking" of the geese sometimes made it difficult to hear the voice of the preacher.

Mrs. F. H. Smith, in the article already mentioned, says: "The first church bell to startle the echoes in Mt. Holyoke's wooded crags was bought in 1670. The turret for the bell was in the center of the four-sided roof and the bell rope hung down in the broad aisle where the ringer stood."

In 1713 the town voted, "That we will build a new Meeting Hous," and that "the Meting house that we have agreed to build shall be forty foot in length and forty foot in breadth with a flattish roof and a Bellcony on one end of said house."

This second house of worship was finished in 1714 and stood at a point half way down the broad street near where it intersects the Northampton road. Sometime after it was built quite extensive improvements were made in the interior of the house, and in 1738 Eleazer Porter built a sounding board and canopy for it. Judd's History of Hadley has the following foot-note: "Such a structure over the preacher and pulpit was named sounding board and canopy in England. In this country it was several feet high, had a peculiar form, with several sides and angles, and was generally of very nice workmanship as well as the projecting front of the pulpit." A spire about one hundred feet high was added to the church sometime after 1753. It is believed that the weathercock, purchased in London, was placed upon the spire at this time. Bailey's Dictionary, 1737, says: "The cock is generally placed on the tops of steeples in England, and is called the weathercock."

This second meeting house was used for nearly a century, having been sold and moved away in the fall





CHURCH AND TOWN HALL, HADLEY

of 1808. George Whitefield preached in this meeting house on one occasion in 1740. Judd in his History of Hadley, referring to Whitefield's visit, observes, "It has been said that when he preached in Hadley, his voice was heard in Hatfield." Whitefield was not allowed to preach in Hatfield, but many of the people of that place went to Northampton and Hadley to hear him.

The present house of worship in Hadley dates from 1808 and was erected near the site of the second meeting house. The only part of the second church used in the new building was the weathercock, which was regilded and mounted in its place. The architect of the third house is unknown. The steeple was patterned after that of the North Church, Boston, on which the lantern was hung out for Paul Revere, when about to take his famous ride to Lexington "through every Middlesex village and farm."

The chairman of the building committee was once a lawyer in Boston and the contractor was a Boston man. The influence of Sir Christopher Wren is seen in the tower of the church.

The writer of this sketch does not deem it necessary in the treatment of his theme to give an account of the difficulties and differences, which resulted in the moving of the meeting house from its ancient site to the present situation on Middle street and the building of a second house of worship by the occupants of West street. The bitter contention, described by one writer as "The Feud of the Streets," has subsided, and more than a score of years ago the meeting house on West street ceased to be used for religious purposes and most of the attendants joined forces with the church on Middle street.

Let it suffice to say that the meeting house began quite a long journey in the fall of 1841. It was not until sometime in January of the next year that it was

set upon its present site on Middle street. Extensive alterations were made at this time, again a Boston contractor having been engaged. Dr. F. H. Smith, in a paper read at the one hundredth anniversary of the building of the third meeting house, says: "After having been placed on this spot where it now is the house suffered a complete remodeling. Gallery, pews, and pulpit were taken out. Five years later the lower story was divided into two rooms by a partition. In 1868 and 1869 very extensive improvements were made upon the building. The steeple was newly timbered and a new bell deck constructed. I do not know whether the ceiling was in its present vaulted position in the original building of one hundred years ago or not. A cornice across the eastern end of the interior and the recess behind the pulpit were removed at the time of remodeling in 1868 and 1869, and a new platform and pulpit were built." In 1902, during the pastorate of Rev. Edward E. Keedy, a handsome pipe organ was installed in the church.

The Hadley meeting house is a veritable masterpiece of Colonial architecture. The beautifully proportioned spire with its three tastefully ornamented architectural forms, each a little varied from the others, the delicately wrought hand-carving about the cornice, and "the quaint but graceful windows lighting the lower and upper vestibules," give to the structure a most dignified appearance.

The town has had no more heroic soul in its long history than Rev. John Russell, who brought the first settlers with him from Connecticut in 1659. He it was who bravely harbored the "Regicides." The well known historian of the Connecticut valley, George Sheldon, says of this "greatest hero of Hadley:" "Through the anxious days and lingering nights of more than ten years, he bravely stood within a hand's

breadth of the gates of ignominious death. Month after month, summer and winter, year after year, zealously watching and guarding his trust, John Russell was virtually a prisoner within his own hamlet. Under his very roof-tree he was secreting Edward Whalley and William Goffe, two of the patriot judges who condemned to the scaffold that misguided and perfidious representative of the 'divine rights of kings,' Charles I, of England. These two men were now proscribed; a price was set upon their heads, and swift retribution awaited any who might relieve or conceal them."

The weathercock, which surmounts the steeple of the meeting house, is loved and admired by all the people of Hadley. The following lines are taken from a poem, "The Hadley Weathercock," written by Julia Taft Bayne, wife of a former pastor of the church :

"On Hadley steeple proud I sit,  
Steadfast and true, I never flit,  
Summer and winter, night and day,  
The merry winds around me play,  
And far below my gilded feet  
The generations come and go,  
In one unceasing ebb and flow,  
Year after year in Hadley street.  
I nothing care, I only know,  
God sits above, He wills it so;  
While roundabout and roundabout and  
roundabout I go,  
The way o' the wind, the changing wind,  
the way o' the wind to show."

For more than one hundred and fifty years the weathercock has looked down from his lofty perch upon the streets and homes of Hadley.





CHURCH AND OLD ELM, HATFIELD. ABOUT 1860





## Sketch of the Hatfield Church

**T**HE Congregational church in Hatfield, Massachusetts, is a subject well adapted to awaken interest in all who love New England institutions and ways. At the time of its organization there were only three other churches in the Connecticut valley in Massachusetts, the others being Springfield, organized in 1637; Hadley, organized in 1659; Northampton, organized in 1661.

In the admirable work, "A History of Hatfield," by Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells, it is stated that the exact date of the organization of the church in Hatfield is problematical. The writers evidently inclined to the belief that the church was organized as early as 1670. The pastor, Rev. Hope Atherton, was ordained May 10, 1670, and it seems altogether probable that he was ordained over the church in Hatfield. For almost two hundred and fifty years it has been the only Protestant church in the town and during all that time the town has escaped the misfortune of having too many churches or being divided by sectarianism.

The Hatfield church has enjoyed the ministry of several eminent divines. Rev. William Williams served the church from 1686 to 1741, fifty five years. Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, who was ordained as colleague to Mr. Williams in 1739, served as minister of the church forty one years. Rev. Joseph Lyman, D. D., who was ordained in 1772, continued as minister until 1828, fifty six years. Rev. John M. Greene, D. D., the friend and adviser of Sophia Smith, founder of Smith College, was pastor of the Hatfield church from 1857 to 1868.

Rev. Robert M. Woods, D. D., who was ordained over the church in 1877, continued as pastor until his death in 1909, a period of thirty two years. Dr. Woods was acting pastor for the year previous to his installation. These five ministers together gave the church almost two hundred years of service. It is not remarkable under the circumstances that the church became stable and influential. Such a church endears itself to all the members of the community. It is so intimately associated with the lives and fortunes of the people that it becomes an object of love and veneration.

The Hatfield church has the distinction of having had in its membership Sophia Smith, the founder of Smith College, and of having had for its pastor the Rev. John M. Greene, D. D., Miss Smith's closest adviser at the time she decided to devote her fortune to the founding of the college for women in Northampton, Massachusetts.

The building of the first meeting house in Hatfield was begun in 1668 and services of worship were held in the house that year, although it was not completed until later. It stood in the middle of the street at a point a little below the site of the present church. It was thirty feet square and had a "four-sided roof flat on top." It was without glass in the windows and there was no way of heating the building.

The second meeting house was erected in 1699 and stood on, or near, the site of the first building. It faced east and west and had galleries, a turret and bell. There was no way of heating this house. It must have been regarded at the time as a worthy structure, for it evidently served to some extent as a model for some other houses of worship built in the same period. The edifices erected about this time in Deerfield and Westfield, Massachusetts, were of "Ye bigness of Hatfield meeting house."

No 2301 continued in 2302  
 Preach'd at Hasfield June 30 - 1811  
 - at Southwold May 5<sup>th</sup> - 1813  
 - at Haverly 1812  
 - at Amherst 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov April 16 - 1815  
 - at Easthampton May 14 - 1815

### Sermon 1 upon

Gen XII. 3 And I will bless them that  
 bless thee & curse him that curseth thee  
 and in thee shall all families of the  
 earth be blessed.

The call of Abraham is one of the most  
 conspicuous facts recorded in the old testa-  
 ment. It is an event of the greatest im-  
 portance and has produced all the leading  
 benefits flowing from the counsels of  
 Gods redeeming grace to this world of  
 apostate sinners. Before the birth of  
 Abraham God had <sup>up</sup> various means  
 for the recovery and salvation of a  
 world lying in ruins. Before the  
 flood for more than sixteen centuries  
 God had lengthened out the lives of men



**SOPHIA SMITH, FOUNDER OF SMITH COLLEGE**

The third meeting house was erected in 1750, on a site a little south of the former houses, and faced north and south. It was fifty six feet long, forty five feet wide, and had a belfry and tower with Gothic points. Stoves were placed in the vestibule of this house and pipes extended through the auditorium. This arrangement was a compromise as there was opposition to having stoves in the house of worship. The building was sold to the late Elijah Bardwell, who moved it on to his premises, where it still stands. It is the red building in the rear of Mr. F. H. Bardwell's residence, and is used for a barn. It was in this house that the representatives of fifty towns met in the August convention that preceded the Shays' Rebellion and drew up their list of twenty five "grievances."

The late Samuel D. Partridge, in his "Reminiscences," states that this third meeting house had a tower built up from the ground, surmounted by a tall spire, on the top of which was a brass rooster. He also states that about 1850 the belfry and spire were taken down and the bell transferred to a tower erected on the other end of the building. At this time, according to Mr. Partridge, the old pews were taken out, slips put in instead, and a platform pulpit substituted for the high pulpit.

The story of the building of the present house of worship has never been told in print, so far as the writer of this sketch knows, and is now given because it affords a fine illustration of the spirit and manner in which many of the old time meeting houses were erected.

The parish records of the time are complete and furnish the facts here stated. One Ephraim L. Hastings certified that he had posted a warrant on one of the south doors of the meeting house, calling for a meeting of the First Parish at the Town Hall, January

15, 1849, at six o'clock, to see what means the parish would take to build a new meeting house and dispose of the old one. At the parish meeting of the date named it was voted to build a new house of worship, provided sufficient funds could be raised by the sale of slips. J. D. Billings, E. Bardwell, Jr., and Erastus Cowles were appointed a committee to see if the necessary funds could be obtained. Justin Wait, George Wait, Josiah Brown, John A. Billings and Jonathan Porter were chosen a committee to procure plans, estimate the expense of the new building and find a site.

At an adjourned meeting held January 31, 1849, Alonzo Parker, of Conway, brought forward a plan, drawn by himself, for the new house. It was announced that a site for the house of worship and for horse-sheds could be bought of the estate of Benjamin Smith, deceased, for the sum of \$400. Instructions were given to the building committee at this meeting to examine the meeting house in Springfield and the house in Meriden, Connecticut, and any other houses of worship they might think best to inspect. There was also talk about a vestry and measures for warming the house. It was voted to purchase the proposed site for the sum named by the committee. The name of George W. Hubbard appears in the records as parish clerk at this time.

February 5, 1849, the building committee reported a plan for the meeting house, calling for a structure eighty feet long, including a portico in front of seven feet, supported by four Ionic columns, and a vestibule of ten feet. The width of the building proposed was fifty feet, and according to the plan there were to be seventy six pews on the lower floor and twenty in the gallery, with suitable seats for the accommodation of the choir. The pews in the new house were appraised at \$5,880.



THE FOUR IONIC COLUMNS





**REV. JOHN M. GREENE, D. D.**  
**The Originator of the idea of Smith College**

A vote to build the house according to the plan proposed was passed. Nine pews were reserved for the use of the parish, one of these being for the pastor's family.

The pews were appraised at sums varying from \$12 up to \$135. Free pews were not the fashion in that day. In February, 1849, at a parish meeting, there was a sale of choice of pews. The highest price paid for a choice was twenty dollars, Moses Warner paying that sum. Sophia and Harriet Smith paid the same amount; J. D. Billings paid fifteen dollars. The lowest price paid for a choice was one dollar and fifty cents. At a later sale Samuel Graves paid eighteen dollars. At a meeting of the parish held February 19, 1849, it was reported that the amount raised from sale of pews amounted to \$5,839.25. Eleven pews appraised at \$525 were left unsold.

At the same meeting it was voted that the committee chosen to obtain a plan proceed to procure various master builders' proposals and erect a meeting house according to the plan already adopted by the parish. Jonathan Porter and John A. Billings resigned from the committee, and Elijah Bardwell, Jr., and Alpheus Cowles were chosen in their stead.

At an adjourned meeting of the parish, March 12, 1849, Captain Isaac Damon, it is recorded, came into the meeting and "gave a bill to build the house for \$4,750." The contract was awarded to him and the building committee instructed to superintend the erection of the new house.

The writer is unable to ascertain from the records what plan it was that was adopted at the parish meeting February 5, 1849. January 31, Alonzo Parker, of Conway, presented a plan for the new house drawn by himself. No description of this plan is given in the records, unless it be the one given in the record of the meeting of February 5th. The fact that Captain

Damon came into the meeting of the parish held March 12, and was awarded the contract for the new building, leads the writer to believe that it was his influence that determined the plan for the new house. Damon had for many years been a leading architect and builder of western Massachusetts. He resided near by in Northampton and must have been well acquainted with the members of the Hatfield parish. The meeting house which he built in Hatfield has certain features which suggest the Damon style of building. The corner stone of the new house was laid May 23, 1849. The record is as follows :

"May 23d, 1849. The corner stone of the new meeting house was this day laid with appropriate ceremonies: an address was delivered on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Woodbridge of Hadley.

Attest.

Geo. W. Hubbard, Clerk."

At a parish meeting held August 27, 1849, the matter of "Fresco painting" for the meeting house was discussed and a committee appointed to see if the sum of three hundred dollars could be raised for the purpose. October 16, 1849, a meeting of the parish was held to consider the matter of purchasing a new bell and disposing of the old one.

January 28, 1850, there was a report made to the parish by the building committee, showing that \$6,665.13 had been expended in the construction of the new house and \$400 for the site. The sum of \$5,880 had been realized from the sale of pews and \$484.25 from bids for choice of pews, leaving a deficit of \$235. At a meeting of the parish held January 29, 1851, it was voted that the meeting house should not be opened for any other purposes than religious meetings and rehearsals of the choir, except by permission of the parish given by vote at a legal parish meeting.

It is interesting to learn that one of the articles in the warrant for the parish meeting held March 25, 1850, called upon the parish to take action in regard to the elm tree in front of the meeting house. In spite of this apparent purpose to remove the old tree, it was still standing at the close of the Civil war. The town clerk, Mr. L. H. Kingsley, thinks it was removed about 1865. He has in his possession a cane made from the wood of the tree. As may be seen from the accompanying illustration it was a noble old tree. It is said to have been thirty three feet around the base of the trunk. In Memorial Hall is the great iron key of the first meeting house. It is nearly seven inches in length.

From the parish records of 1849 and 1850 it is learned that the women of the town were active in raising funds for the furnishing of the new meeting house, no small matter, considering the size and character of the building.

The fathers are entitled to much credit for the house of worship which they erected in 1849. The building is well proportioned, the tapering spire graceful and well adapted to the rest of the structure, and the portico with its four Ionic columns beautiful and impressive. The entire structure is splendidly adapted to the surroundings. It seems a pity that the white paint, so intimately associated with the old New England meeting house, should have been discarded by the present generation. Here and there in the Connecticut valley some local painter, void of the historical sense, has been allowed to cover up the white paint, so characteristic of the old meeting houses, with a color utterly inharmonious with the associations of the building.

In 1867 extensive changes were made in the present house of worship, the structure of 1849, a vestry

being constructed and an organ loft built. The parlors in the rear of the church were built in 1891. In 1892 extensive alterations were made in the interior of the church. The clock was placed in the steeple in 1898. In 1909 a beautiful window was placed in the east end of the church in memory of Rev. Robert M. Woods, D. D.

The bell is the third one used. The first one weighed about nine hundred pounds and was used from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the last quarter of the nineteenth. In 1876 it was cracked by being rung violently in celebration of the advent of July Fourth of that year. It was recast and enlarged, but was cracked again July Fourth of the next year. It was again recast. It weighs eighteen hundred pounds. No music is sweeter to the church going people of Hatfield than the sound of this bell. Its tones are fixed fast in the boyhood memories of the writer of this sketch, and it is with love and gratitude that he has written the story of the fourth meeting house in Hatfield. This was the meeting house of his early life. It was in this house that he made his first public confession of Christ and united with the church, just before leaving home for college. Here it was in earlier days that love of country was fostered in his breast by the patriotic discourses of the pastor, Rev. John M. Greene, preached during the Civil war, and here on the Sunday after President Lincoln's assassination he saw the flag of his country draped and hung behind the pulpit, and heard the preacher with righteous indignation denounce all those whose sentiments or deeds had led up to the terrible event of the death of Abraham Lincoln.

President Timothy Dwight journeyed through Hatfield in the forepart of the last century and wrote his impressions of the place in his "Travels." "The



**THE WOODS MEMORIAL WINDOW**



inhabitants," he writes, "have for a long period been conspicuous for uniformity of character. They have less intercourse with their neighbors, than those of most other places. An air of silence and retirement appears everywhere." He expresses the opinion that their seclusion and devotion to daily business contributed much to their prosperity. He adds, "The people of Hatfield are good farmers. Their fields are cultivated, and their cattle fattened in a superior manner."

Without doubt the great educational institution for women at Northampton, Smith College, owes its origin indirectly to the Hatfield church, of which Sophia Smith, the founder of the college, was a member. Her mind and spirit were moulded by the church, which exerted a strong influence over her throughout her life.

Rev. Irving A. Flint, was installed pastor of the church, February 23, 1911, president M. L. Burton, of Smith College, preaching the sermon.

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**FIRST MEETING HOUSE OF SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
HOLYOKE, MASS.**

Edifice dedicated July 27, 1853. Corner of Dwight and High streets.  
Architect, Henry Austin, New Haven, Conn. Use of the  
building discontinued the last Sunday of 1884



## Meeting Houses in South Hadley, Massachusetts

### ASSOCIATIONS OF MARY LYON AND HER INSTITUTION

**I**T seemed to the writer that no one to whom he could turn for aid in telling the story of the meeting houses in South Hadley and Mary Lyon's association with the second and third of these houses would be more competent to render him the assistance needed than the South Hadley pastor, Rev. Jesse Gilman Nichols, A. M. He accordingly invited Mr. Nichols to prepare the desired sketch, the result being the appreciative and valuable article below, printed verbatim as written by Mr. Nichols.

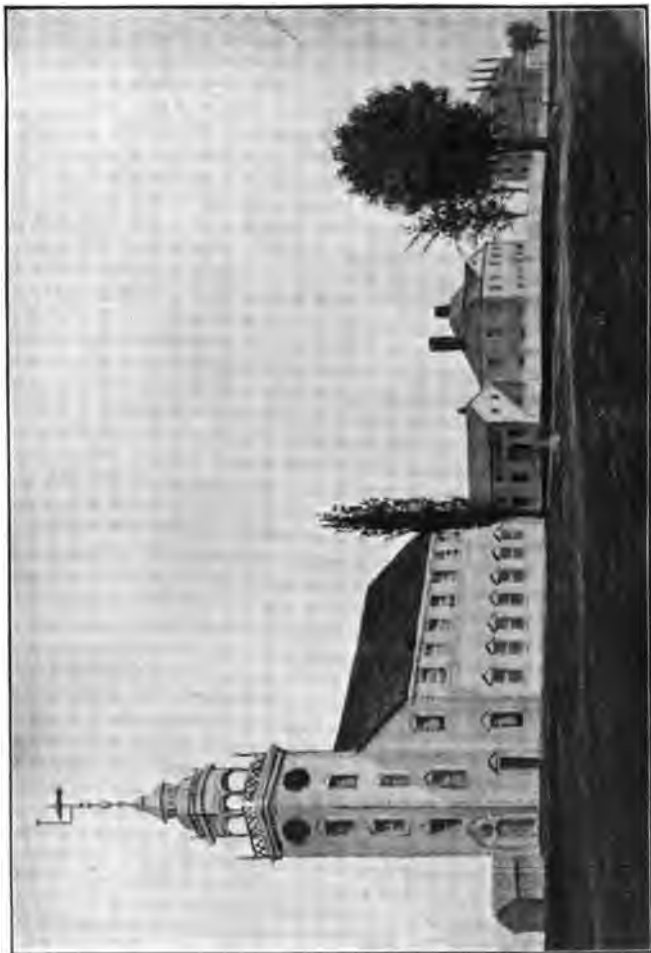
ALTHOUGH the town of Hadley made grant of pasture land south of Holyoke range as early as 1675, it was not until 1720 that settlers began to make their homes there. In the face of determined opposition on the part of the older people, who tried to discourage them by urging that the southern slopes of the mountains were but the coverts of bears, wolves and panthers, and that the thin sandy soil of the plains would furnish bare subsistence, a small party made their way over the mountain pass through the wilderness. The seriousness of this venture is shown by the fact that before their departure the parents tearfully invoked the blessings of Heaven upon their children.

In those days attendance upon public worship was compulsory, and the church authorities were relentless toward those who were able bodied; no one could indulge in unnecessary absence. No exception was

made for the new settlers on the south side of the mountain. On the Sabbath they followed the narrow Indian trail eight miles to the meeting house, and after the services were over retraced their steps. This weekly journey became so irksome even to the most hardy of the settlers that they petitioned the General Court at Boston in 1727 to be set off as a separate precinct with power to build a meeting house and settle a minister. The Court granted this petition on condition that the precinct contain forty families within two years, and that they settle a learned and orthodox minister within three years. The Court granted a second petition in 1728, provided they build a meeting house and settle a minister within three years. Upon a third petition in 1732 the Court extended the time limit two years.

In 1733 the new precinct so far met the requirements of the grant as to erect a plain frame meeting house. In 1734 a committee, especially selected, seated the meeting house according to dignity and rank; ratable estate, age, and ability being taken into consideration. There was no steeple. In some New England parishes of this period, where there were no bell towers or steeples, the authorities hung a bell on a frame erected for that purpose near the meeting house, or on some noble tree. In 1749 this precinct voted "to have a sign for meeting on y<sup>e</sup> Sabbath," and authorized the purchase of a conch shell (konk), and the payment to John Lane of such a sum as "the assessors should agree" to blow the shell.

Grindall Rawson, a young Harvard graduate, was ordained first minister October 3, 1733. He was an able but very eccentric man, outspoken in matters theological, thereby giving offense to his people. Not more than four years elapsed before the meeting house became the center of stormy scenes. The situation



Photograph of painting by Joseph Chandler  
THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE

PLACE OF GRADUATION OF THE FIRST CLASS OF MT. HOLYOKE SEMINARY

The Dwight house, next to meeting house, moved to rear to make place for the Art Building, is now the College Hospital. Next to it, where Library now stands, is Dr. Condit's home. At the extreme right is the original Seminary building



became so strained that a mutual council, of which Rev. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton was scribe, met to decide whether or not "Mr. Rawson was qualified for the work of the ministry, as to his learning, his orthodoxy and his morals." Although the council upheld the minister in a general way and he had some loyal supporters, the dissatisfaction became so general that in 1741 a later council advised separation. As Mr. Rawson completely ignored the repeated votes of the parish and the advice of the council, and continued to preach, certain members of a committee of fifteen siezed him while engaged in the service, carried him from the pulpit, down the aisle, and forcibly ejected him. It is said that his voice could be heard distinctly above the turmoil, as he was borne past the awe-stricken worshippers.

During the earlier part of the pastorate of Rev. John Woodbridge the meeting house was a place of quieter scenes. Mr. Woodbridge came from Suffield, Connecticut, in 1742, and his pastorate marks an era of great prosperity. He was a gentle, scholarly minister, most faithful in all parochial duties, who won and kept the esteem of his people. South Hadley was formally set apart from the mother town in 1753, and the church grew so rapidly under the ministry of Mr. Woodbridge that the meeting house was not large enough to seat all of the people. The inhabitants voted in 1751 to build a new house near the old one.

When the question of location arose, the parish divided into two factions and engaged in a bitter controversy. Those who lived in the eastern section wanted the new building located at the end of the lane on Cold Hill; a majority favored the old site. So high did feeling run that after several committees, composed of members of both parties and of others called in from other parishes, had attempted to settle the matter over



the heads of a fickle few, who held the balance of power, and changed first to one side then to the other, the General Court formally set apart the eastern district (Granby) as a new parish. This was not accomplished, however, before some of the more hot-headed of the eastern district stealthily pulled down a part of the frame of the new meeting house and hid the posts in the swamp.

Upon the completion of the new meeting house the old one was moved a few rods to the north, where it now stands remodeled as a dwelling. The second meeting house faced the north, standing south and east of the first. The high pulpit, surmounted by a sounding board suspended by a great rod, was on the east side. The choir occupied the front seat of the west gallery, and the negroes back seats on a higher level in the same gallery. The body of the house had large square pews. The main door was in the middle of the west side. There was also an entrance on the north end for the men and one on the south end for the women. As in other meeting houses of the period, the seats were on hinges, so that the worshipers could lean against the sides of the pews and stand more comfortably during the long prayer. Sometimes the sacred stillness of prayer time was broken by the clatter of the falling seats. There was no means of keeping warm in winter except by footstoves. It is a matter of interest that, in later years, Dr. Condit had a little pulpit stove, which he replenished from time to time during the service.

Mr. Woodbridge continued to preach until 1776, and lived until 1783. Mr. Joel Hayes, a Yale graduate of 1773, became his colleague, 1782, and preached for over forty years. It was during the ministry of Mr. Hayes, in 1791, that Colonel Ruggles Woodbridge, son of the former pastor, a man of considerable means and force



**THE WHITE CHURCH**  
**Mary Lyon's Funeral Held in This House**



of character, presented a bell to the parish. Tradition says that Colonel Woodbridge went to the foundry in Troy and cast fifty silver dollars into the molten metal to give the bell a silvery tone. He gave also a silver communion service, now one of the treasured possessions of the church.

Interesting customs sprang up in connection with the ringing of the bell, some of which have continued to a comparatively recent time. The bell was rung at noon, and a curfew at nine. Colonel Woodbridge was so strict in his manner of life, that he insisted that his workmen drop all work at the first stroke of the bell at noon; and one of his workmen, so the story goes, more facetious than the others, climbing a ladder, bearing a bunch of shingles, dropped them to the ground at the first stroke of the bell.

When there was a death in the parish the number of strokes on the bell indicated first whether the deceased was a man or a woman or a child, and then a second number of strokes the age of the deceased. The bell tolled also at funerals. It hung in a beautiful and lofty bell-tower erected from the ground, forming a porch about ten feet square on the north end of the meeting house. Entrances were made on the three sides of the porch.

There were no important changes in the meeting house during the ministry of the Rev. Artemas Boies, who served the church from 1824 to 1834. It was during the ministry of his successor, Rev. Joseph Condit, ordained in 1835, that Mary Lyon sent her committee from Old Ipswich, in Essex, to select a site for her Seminary. There was keen competition among the towns in the Connecticut valley for the honor of having the Seminary located within their borders. All made liberal offers of financial support. It is said that the committee were attracted not only by the natural

beauties of South Hadley, but by the commodious meeting house. The parish manifested their good faith in her enterprise by raising \$8,000 for Miss Lyon, a large sum for that day. Furthermore, to accommodate the members of the Seminary they removed the square pews, placed the pulpit in the north end at the foot of the bell tower, building the great sounding board into the second story of the tower. Winding stairs on either side led to the pulpit, which rested on posts six feet high. There were two aisles with a row of pews between and one row on either side next to the walls. As the Seminary grew additional seats were placed in the broad aisles; the galleries were changed to the east and west sides and south end, the last being the choir gallery.

When Miss Lyon came to South Hadley, before the erection of the Seminary building, she spent much time in the home of Rev. Mr. Condit, who lived in the second house south of the meeting house. He became her trusted personal friend and spiritual adviser. He was one of the incorporators named in the charter of the Seminary, secretary for years of the board of trustees, and the one to deliver the principal address at the dedication of the Seminary building. The manuscript of this address still exists. It was most fortunate that the Seminary, which was destined to become such a strong spiritual force in the world, had at its beginning such a pastor as Dr. Condit, who by his marked spirituality and scholarly attainments greatly aided Miss Lyon in making effective what has come to be known the world over as "the Mount Holyoke spirit."

The members of the South Hadley church hospitably opened their homes to the teachers and students before the Seminary building was entirely ready for occupancy, and gave their support in every way to Miss

**Lyon.** The young men of the village helped Deacon Safford, of Boston, one of the trustees, to set the house in order, putting down carpets and unpacking furniture. One enthusiastic girl wrote: "The South Hadley people were very kind to us. Mr. Hayes showed us to our seats in church as courteously as if we were personal friends whom he delighted to welcome to the house of God. Winter mornings, instead of being shut in by the deep snow, we found the nicest of paths cut for us by somebody in the night."

Thus was begun a close friendly relation between the church and the Seminary, which has lasted to this day, those associated with the present Mount Holyoke College, both at home and in distant places, being among the honored members of the church.

Special interest attaches to the church services of that day. It was no ordinary congregation that gathered on the Sabbath. In the number were the pioneers in the great movement for the higher education of women. Some of the leading divines of that day visited the Seminary each year and preached from that pulpit. The town's people were expected to be in their pews when the bell ceased tolling; then the pupils of the Seminary entered by the south door and occupied the seats in the east gallery. Some families invited their friends among the students to sit in their pews.

There was always a large choir led by the precentor and accompanied by players on the bass viol, 'cello, violin and flute. In later years the bugle, clarinet, trombone and bass horn were added. The older people regarded this larger band as a desecrating influence, and denounced it openly at town meeting. Miss Lyon enforced the lesson of the morning by questioning the pupils at dinner and by making her own comments on the sermon.

In this second meeting house the first graduation exercise was held, although Miss Lyon personally preferred the Seminary hall for that event. She refers to the matter in a letter to Miss Grant :

"But the agitation of the question about going to the meeting house on Thursday afternoon seemed almost to add more, when I had just all I could do. It came up once or twice, and was settled in the negative, as I felt a great reluctance to it. After Dr. Hawes came on Wednesday evening, the subject was again discussed. I found that the trustees, Dr. H., and the other gentlemen were all becoming decided that it was best to go to the meeting house; I thought it the most modest to acquiesce. The certificates were given at the close of the services, but no other exercise differed from a common public meeting. It did not appear unsuitable, as I thought it would, and I was very glad I consented. The meeting house was full, and I think some of our donors would have been dissatisfied if we had met in the Seminary hall. Our certificates were signed by Miss Caldwell and myself, and simply countersigned by the secretary of the board, Mr. Condit. Of course the giving of the certificates devolved on Mr. Condit. He did it in his neat, elegant manner. Dr. Hawes' address was good common sense. Mr. Boies, of Boston, made the first prayer, and Dr. Carr the last."

Miss Caldwell, the associate principal, adds this account :

"The trustees, the orator of the day, the teachers, the senior class, and the school, walked to the church in procession, the school clad in white, with heads uncovered, and shaded by parasols. The side pews and galleries were already crowded when Miss Lyon led her beautiful troop in quiet dignity to the seats reserved for them. It was an hour in her life never to be forgotten. The battle had been fought, the victory was hers. In all that year she had never found an hour to spend in astonishment at her success, but now, when circumstances forced the view upon her, wonder, gratitude, and praise filled her heart. Her great soul was surcharged with joy; smiles and tears strove for the mastery on her radiant face. For an hour she resigned herself to the emotions of the occasion and gave way to a joy with which no one could intermeddle."

Surely this house of God, whose walls witnessed such a sublime scene, became on that day, in a new



*Affectionately yours* *Mary Lyon,*

From a miniature painting in 1832.





sense, "holy ground." From that time on it became also the place of frequent revival of religion.

Other speakers at later anniversary exercises in the second meeting house were Rufus Anderson, Mark Hopkins, Bela B. Edwards, Edward Hitchcock, Lyman Beecher and Edward N. Kirk.

The history of Mount Holyoke Seminary is vitally connected with the great missionary interests of the world. Within the first fifty years one hundred and seventy eight students of Mount Holyoke went into the foreign field alone. It is not too much to say that within the sacred walls of this ancient meeting house, and of its successor, many received the first impulse, or were quickened in the purpose already formed, to dedicate their lives to the service of the Kingdom at home or in foreign fields. Truly, there are many sacred and tender associations in the minds of hundreds of graduates of Mount Holyoke with the church in South Hadley.

With the continued growth of the town and the Seminary the second meeting house became inadequate. The third house, built in 1844, known as the "Old White Church," faced to the west and was located so near the second building that the bell was easily moved from one belfry to the other without being lowered to the ground. The older house was torn down and the proceeds from the sale of lumber applied to the cost of the new. Most of the money was raised by subscription, the Seminary contributing \$2,000 and taking a lease of a number of pews for ninety years. Miss Lyon gave a new pulpit Bible, twice rescued from the flames that destroyed two meeting houses, and now preserved among the treasures of the church. Dr. Condit preached his last sermon in the old meeting house August 11, 1844, from the text, 2 Peter, 3: 11, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved

what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?", and the first sermon in the new house, November 26, 1844, from the text, Ex. 33: 15, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

The closeness of the bond between Miss Lyon and her pastor, the extent to which she looked to him for counsel and sympathy, the great esteem in which she held him, are revealed by her own words in a letter to a friend :

"Our dear Mr. Condit is very near his home. The king of terrors is approaching with gentle step as if loth to take his prey. Here I am alone in this great building ; no one near to interrupt my grief. I love this solitude for tears and prayers in his behalf. The years of our acquaintance pass in rapid review. As I dwell on him as a friend, a Christian, a counselor, a pastor, sadness spreads over my soul. And yet it is not all sorrow. Heaven seems to be opening her gates to receive another servant of Christ."

How little did Miss Lyon realize that the gates of heaven would open again soon to receive "another servant of Christ"! She died March 5, 1849. To the White Church they carried her, after Dr. Laurie, the new pastor had offered prayer and the young ladies had looked for the last time upon the face of their beloved teacher and friend ; the three relatives present, the trustees, teachers, pupils and other friends walking in solemn procession. The Journal says :

"We were forcibly reminded of anniversary occasions, and the thought that we were following that dear form for the last time was almost overwhelming. Prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Samuel Harris, of Conway, and by Rev. Mr. Swift, of Northampton. The sermon was by Rev. Dr. Humphrey, from the texts, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,' and 'The memory of the just is blessed.' The hymns sung were those beginning, 'God moves in a mysterious way,' 'Servant of God, well done,' and 'Why do we mourn departing friends?' From the church the procession moved to the grave, which is on a gentle



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MARY LYON AT 48. THE DAGUERRETYPE



eminence in the Seminary grounds, a little to the east of the building. Gathering round it, the school sang, 'Sister, thou wast mild and lovely,' varying the hymn to suit the occasion, and were addressed in a few appropriate words by Dr. Laurie."

The Monument, enclosed by an iron fence, covered with English ivy from slips sent by hundreds of loving pupils, has become the sacred shrine of thousands who cherish the name of Mary Lyon, and bears her immortal words: "There is nothing in the universe that I fear but that I shall not know all my duty, or shall fail to do it."

It is singularly fitting that the most recent likeness of Miss Lyon should come to light by way of the foreign field. Four years before her death, she sat for a deguerreotype, in Boston, as a parting gift to a young missionary just starting for Ceylon. A daughter of this missionary recently brought it back to this country, a precious treasure sacredly preserved in her family all these years.

The old White Church continued to be the place of worship of the village people and of the Seminary students, welcoming from time to time to its pulpit many eminent preachers, witnessing the anniversary exercises each year, and sending forth with a gracious blessing the Seminary classes of young women.

Rev. Eliphalet Y. Swift, pastor from 1852 to 1858 was followed by Dr. Hiram Mead, whose ministry was signally blessed by a great revival and by numerous accessions to the church. His wife, Elizabeth Storrs Mead, honored and beloved in church and Seminary, became the first president of Mount Holyoke College.

Dr. John M. Greene, who had been Sophia Smith's pastor in Hatfield, and to whom, according to good authority, must be credited, in part, the

inspiration to found Smith College, followed Dr. Mead and in turn was followed by Rev. J. H. Bliss, whose sister, Anna Bliss, went from this parish to Huguenot Seminary, South Africa, to become in recent years the president of Huguenot College.

On Sunday morning, January 18, 1875, the building was burned to the ground. "Within an hour," writes an eye witness, "the spire had fallen backward into the body of the church, which was already burnt bare—its 'pleasant things laid waste.' The beautiful new organ had been destroyed; the familiar seats, the pulpit, the communion table, hallowed by the sacred memories of so many years, were all gone."

At the afternoon service, in the Seminary hall, Dr. Herrick, the pastor, chose the text, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." For thirteen months public worship was held in the hall. As the Seminary had owned one third of the meeting house, they turned over to the parish committee their share of the insurance to be applied to the construction of the new building. It was built of brick, Gothic style, with beautiful spire, and pointed arches in window and door spaces, and costing with its furnishings and organ about \$28,000. It was dedicated February 23, 1876. Dr. William DeLoss Love commenced to supply the church in September, 1878, and was installed May 7, 1879, the parish under his leadership having cleared up the debt of \$10,000 on the new building.

The people were not permitted to enjoy this beautiful house of worship many years. On March 4, 1894, at the close of the Sunday school, this building became a prey to the flames. Again the Seminary hospitably opened its doors for the church services. On the Sunday after the fire, Dr. Newton I. Jones the pastor, following the example of Dr. Herrick, preached

a sympathetic and stirring sermon from the text, Nehemiah 2: 20, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build," greatly encouraging his disheartened people, and rallying them for rebuilding. The college this time contributed generously, and gave up their share of ownership. The present stately and commodious edifice, the fifth was dedicated January 16, 1895. One pastorate of seven years, that of Rev. Arthur B. Patten, intervened between that of Dr. Jones and the present pastorate, which began January 21, 1906.

In order to meet the needs of the increased number of students and the requirements of a modern college, in September, 1905, four years after president Mary E. Woolley assumed the duties of her office, regular religious services were established in Mary Lyon Chapel, the preachers representing different denominations and coming from all parts of the country.

Jesse Gilman Nichols.







CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, GRANBY. 1922



## Congregational Church Granby, Massachusetts

**I**MMEDIATELY after the incorporation of the town of Granby in 1768, the heirs of Samuel Moody deeded to the town as a memorial to Mr. Moody an acre of land for a meeting house site, and a house of worship was erected upon it. The first minister of the church was the Rev. Simon Bachus, a nephew of Jonathan Edwards.

In 1817 efforts were made to build a new meeting house. The question of location became a serious one and after disinterested parties had failed to solve the difficulty, an Ecclesiastical Council divided the church into the East and West Parishes. The house of worship now used was erected in 1821-22 by the East Parish.

In 1836 an arrangement was effected between the two parishes by which a call was given to Rev. Eli Moody of the West Parish to become pastor of the East Parish and an invitation extended to the people of his charge to unite with the East Parish, a union of the two parishes being thus virtually effected.

The raising of the present meeting house was a notable event in the community. Two days were required for the work, the second day being devoted to raising the frame of the steeple. The men who had proved most effective in the work of the first day were entrusted with this work. When all was completed, the raisers stood on the topmost point and sang some familiar hymns, closing with the Doxology.

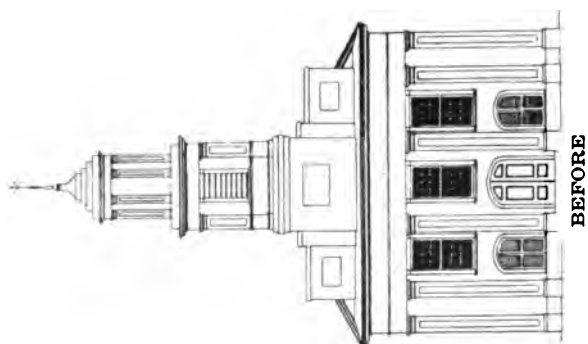
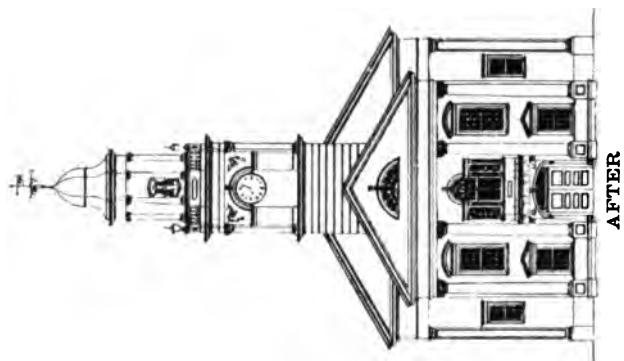
The Granby church has been blessed with several pastors of great ability and worth. At times it has

held in its membership persons of unusual musical talent, who have voluntarily given much of their time to the church, thus making the services of the sanctuary a delight and blessing to all the members. From this church many consecrated workers have gone forth to labor in the home and foreign missionary fields.

Standing as it does on a considerable elevation, this noble house of worship, with its well proportioned tower of three stories and Gothic roof and its portico supported by four Ionic columns, presents a most pleasing appearance. Visitors journeying through the country and coming unexpectedly upon this fine example of Colonial meeting house exclaim with surprise and delight.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WILLIAMSBURG, MASS.  
Example of a Remodeled House.



## Congregational Church Williamsburg, Massachusetts

**T**HE present edifice of the Congregational church in Williamsburg was erected in 1836.

In 1859 it was raised up and a vestry was built under it. In 1897, during the pastorate of Rev. Henry S. Snyder, the edifice was remodeled by Messrs. E. C. and G. C. Gardner, architects, of Springfield, Massachusetts.

At the request of the author, Mr. G. C. Gardner prepared the following description of the church :

"It was in the first decade of the 19th century that the influence of the new French school of architecture, generally denominated the 'Neo-Greek,' was felt in England. Roughly speaking, the characteristics of the style were a decided return to the simple and severe lines of Greek architecture, as distinguished from the more florid and complicated Renaissance. It was a natural reaction against the growing debasement of the earlier French and English Renaissance, which was particularly striking in England.

The 'latest styles' in architecture spread more slowly then than now, and it was not until about the end of the first quarter of the century that this type of work became popular in New England public architecture. Here in the Connecticut valley the period was a little later. The Congregational Church in Williamsburg, built in 1836, of which an illustration before its alteration is shown, was a very good example of this Greek revival, as it has been well named.

The general characteristics of the style were well carried out with the comparatively meagre means



which the committee had at hand. The original church with its very simple straight lines and broad unbroken surfaces was a dignified structure. The spire, or tower, always the most difficult feature of this style to handle, was rather unsatisfactory.

The program presented to the architects of the alterations of the church was to provide Sunday school accommodations at the front of the church and make these accommodations two stories in height. The requirements of the addition called for a division of the addition into several rooms, which should be amply lighted. This meant an increase in the wall openings for windows, and, moreover, that these openings should be comparatively small, a requirement which virtually destroyed the characteristic charm of the Greek revival type of architecture. Then, too, the placing of the addition on the front of the church called for an increase and added prominence to a belfry, already rather small. The architects, therefore, decided to go back twenty years in history, and, by making slight changes in front and in the tower, convert the church into the Colonial type, so well known throughout the valley."

Rev. John Pierpont, the present minister of the church, writes, "Our church is said to be one of the three finest examples of a remodeled Colonial church."

## Congregational Church Enfield Massachusetts

**S**ITUATED on both banks of Swift river and shut in by the near-by hills, Great Quabbin, Ram Mountain, and Little Quabbin, the village of Enfield is one of the many attractive places in the paradise of the Connecticut valley and contiguous country. The late Francis H. Underwood, L. L. D., a native of Enfield and noted in Boston literary circles, describing in his interesting book "Quabbin" a view from the top of a hill overlooking the village of Enfield says: "The traveler who has seen something of the Old World finds that the tranquil beauty of the scene lingers in memory." The following interesting description of the old church is taken from "Quabbin:"

"The meeting-house of the village formerly stood sidewise to the road in a green space, flanked by rows of horse-sheds, some of them decrepit, and all unpainted. In its first estate it was of a dingy sulphur color, and without a steeple; but its oaken frame and trussed roof were made to endure. Later, a steeple was set astride the roof; the building was painted white, furnished with green (outside) blinds, and turned with its end to the street. The vane, of sheet metal, gilded, was cut in form of a man, the head cleaving the wind, and the legs extended for rudder. As it turned with a sharp cry on the rod which pierced its body, it needed but little aid from the imagination of a boy to become the image of some sinner transfixed in air, and held aloft to swing in lingering pain.

In later days the boys found, in the cob-webbed and dusty space below the belfry, a long-forgotten cask of ball catridges, which had been kept, according to law, to be ready for an emergency that never happened. The paper covers were rotten, and the powder decomposed; and it was great fun to drop the leaden ounce-balls from the belfry railing, and then find them flattened and hot upon the stone steps below.

The pulpit within was high, approached by flights of stairs, and above it was hung a sounding-board, in shape like an extinguisher. It was often a matter of wonder as to what would happen to the minister if the chain should break; but the boys were assured by the thought that 'The Lord is mindful of his own.'

The pews were square, each family being enclosed as in a pen, all facing inwards. The uncushioned wooden seats were hinged, and were raised as people stood up during prayer, to fall with a multitudinous clatter when the prayer ended. There was a gallery on three sides, the part facing the pulpit being occupied by the choir.

A century earlier it was the custom in New England to 'seat the meeting,' that is, to assign seats to the town's people according to their rank, as magistrates, elders, deacons, college-bred men, land-owners, mechanics, and laborers. In Quabbin each head of a family owned the pew he occupied, paying an annual tax thereon to the parish. The best places in the meeting-house belonged to those who had the money to pay for them."

Enfield was settled in 1736 and became a town in 1816. The first meeting house was built in 1786-7 at the time of the organization of the "parish," and the first minister, Rev. Joshua Crosby, who had been a chaplain under Washington, was settled in 1789. The site for the meeting house was given by the grandfather of General Joseph Hooker of Civil war fame. A belfry was built in 1814 and a bell, the gift of Josiah Keith, afterwards placed therein. Mr. Crosby continued as pastor until his death in 1835, nearly half a century. He was one of the first trustees of Amherst College and for a time acting president of that institution. The spire of the church, which is very graceful, was designed by Sylvester Lathrop, a resident of Enfield, when he was only twenty one years of age. In 1835 slips were substituted for pews and other improvements made in the building. An organ was placed in the church in 1855. In 1873 extensive improvements were made upon the edifice and an organ costing \$2,500 took the place of the old one. Mr. Edward Smith was a large contributor and prime mover in repairing



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ENFIELD. 1787



the church. A costly town clock was placed in the tower of the church some time prior to 1873. It was in 1873 that the house was given its present beautiful appearance. At that time modern windows were put in and the interior tastefully frescoed. W. F. Pratt and Son, architects, of Northampton, superintended the work, being assisted by a New York architect. In 1903 the church was repainted and refrescoed through the generosity of the late Lyman D. Potter. The late Edward Payson Smith served the church as organist for more than forty years without pecuniary compensation. His beautiful improvisations were much enjoyed by the congregation. The Enfield church is one of those that have wisely done away with the cumbersome system of parish and church organizations, the church having been incorporated February 15, 1906, and the parish dissolved in April of the same year. An interesting entry in the old parish records read as follows: "Voted April 1, 1816 that Ebenezer Winslow sweep the meeting house for one dollar and fifty cents per year to sweep it six times a year and after every town meeting."

The fine photograph of the church from which the accompanying halftone was made is owned by Miss Marion A. Smith of Enfield. The Rev. Alexander Sloan is the present pastor of the church.





THE OLD WHITE CHURCH, WEST SPRINGFIELD.  
1800





## **The Old White Church West Springfield, Massachusetts**

**T**HE old white meeting house on "Mount Orthodox" in West Springfield is one of the most familiar land marks of the Connecticut valley in Massachusetts. Past this structure go countless automobiles and their occupants, touring up and down the valley. The church stands on a considerable elevation and its tall white steeple can be seen from far distant points. In May, 1695, the people living on the west side of the river petitioned the General Court "that they might be permitted to invite and settle a minister." Their petition was granted and a church was formed in 1698; in 1702 the first meeting house was erected. The architect was John Allys, of Hatfield, Massachusetts. The following is quoted from a letter written to the author by Rev. George W. Love, pastor of the Congregational church in West Springfield:

"Turning to the description of this first meeting house, as the cut shows, it was evidently built after the untried plan of some local architect, for it was unique in every particular. It is described as forty two feet square and ninety two feet in height to the top of the spire, the vane of which, by the way, is largely conjectural. The timbers, which were of very large dimensions, were obtained in the nearby virgin forest, and, as was customary, were dressed by hand. The sills, it is said, projected above the floor and the people on entering and leaving were obliged to step over them, stumbling often, and in the early years of its occupancy they also furnished seats for the children: later it is evident an innovation was made by building seats upon

them, an arrangement which was not altogether free from objection, as October 24, 1745, it was 'voted that if there be not a Reformation Respecting the Disorders in the Pews built on the great Beam in the time of Publick Worship, the Committee shall have power, if they see cause, to pull them down.' These pews were said to have been fifteen in number, and the woodwork, as of the pulpit and railing, was of oak and yellow pine. The body of the house was filled with slips, partitioned through the middle, forming two divisions, one occupied by the men, the other by the women. The gallery was on three sides of the building and the treble singers sat in the gallery on the right of the pulpit and the bass singers on the left. The pulpit was much elevated. The glass in the windows was diamond shaped and set in lead sash.

The people gathered for worship in this quaint structure for a full century, although the subject of a new meeting house was agitated as early as 1769, when a committee was appointed to agree upon a location; indeed the location seemed to be a bone of contention, as votes upon this matter were three times passed and afterwards rescinded. This difficulty was not settled until the year 1799, at which time the records show Mr. John Ashley, a prosperous resident of Ashleyville, contributed to the parish the sum of thirteen hundred pounds, on condition that the parish erect a spacious meeting house on a spot designated by him. The last gathering for worship in the old meeting house was on June 20. The building remained standing for eighteen years and was used for town and parochial meetings, when by vote of the town, in 1820, it was demolished.

That the offer of Mr. John Ashley was speedily availed of is shown by the fact that, while the gift was made in 1799, the corner stone of the second edifice,

the present 'White Church,' so called, bears the date June 14, 1800."

Associated with the first and second meeting houses was Rev. Joseph Lathrop, D. D., a representative preacher of his times, who began his ministry in West Springfield in 1756, and died on the last day of December, 1820, in the sixty fifth year of his ministry. He, like many of the leading men of the region in his time, was a graduate of Yale College. The following estimate of Dr. Lathrop is taken from "Holmes' Annals," published in 1829:

"Dr. Lathrop, to an intellect of the first order, united the kindly affections. He was exemplary in the observance of the duties of piety and devotion, and of the social and relative duties. As a Christian minister he was very conspicuous. To his comprehensive intellect and exalted piety was added the acquired knowledge necessary to constitute a great theologian. In his pastoral intercourse he was peculiarly attentive to the state and circumstances of his flock, and an eminent example of prudence. In doubtful and perplexing cases of ecclesiastical concern, he was distinguished as a wise, judicious, and upright counselor; and great confidence was reposed in his judgment."

Truly, there were giants in those days. It was to be expected that a region which in the first two hundred years of its history had such men for ministers of its churches and leaders of affairs as Thomas Hooker and Nathan Strong of Hartford, William Williams and Joseph Lyman of Hatfield, John Russell of Hadley, Solomon Stoddard and Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, Noah Porter of Farmington, Samuel Osgood of Springfield, Eliphalet Williams of East Hartford, Joseph Lathrop of West Springfield, and Joseph Condit of South Hadley, would exert an important influence upon both national and world life. What part of our own land has not felt the influence of the narrow strip of territory bordering on the "Great River?" Indeed, is there any inhabited part of the

globe that has not been in some degree enriched by the life of this region?

In his letter, Mr. Love, referring to the second edifice, states: "In comparing the lines of the second meeting house on 'Orthodox Hill' with the earlier one, a vast improvement is at once noted in the architectural features. What the architect's name was is not any where mentioned, leaving us to suppose the builder was his own architect, which is more remarkable in view of the youth of the builder, Capt. Timothy Billings; indeed his youth seemed likely to defeat his obtaining the contract, for when he appeared before the committee, members of the committee 'doubted if so young a man could construct so great a building,' one of them remarking, 'Why, he has no whiskers on his face,' to which the youthful Billings replied that 'whiskers were not essential to the construction of the building, but brains were.' He had however a staunch supporter on the committee in the person of Justin Ely, Jr., for whom he had but recently completed a palatial residence in the most approved style and workmanship. At any rate, he secured the contract, as the records state, for \$1,400 and ten gallons of St. Croix rum

The edifice was two years in building and was dedicated June 20, 1802. Until the year 1870, very few alterations had been made, except that of changing the pews. In this year the question of repairing and remodeling the old building, or of building a new structure, arose and the church voted to build a new place of worship. The parish later voting not to concur resulted in a division of the church and the erection of the Park Street edifice; following this the old white church was extensively remodeled. The old galleries were removed and a floor laid, making two stories, with the audience room above and the social rooms below. At this time also the upper windows



**FIRST MEETING-HOUSE IN WEST SPRINGFIELD.**



were cut down, giving a more modern exterior. In 1902 a clock was donated for the tower by Mrs. E. J. Nichols, heir of John Ashley, the original donor of the building.

In 1909, the constituency of the old First Church gradually growing less and the Park Street church also feeling the effect of a changing population, a union of the two was effected. As a result of this action the services were transferred to the larger and more modern building on the common, at which time, April 1, 1909, regular services were discontinued in the old meeting house. Since that time it has been used as the headquarters of the First Parish Historical Society, and here are kept the valuable historical paintings belonging to the society. Services are also held during old home week and on anniversary dates. It is also the headquarters of the Boy Scout movement.







THE OLD CHURCH ON THE VILLAGE GREEN. LONGMEADOW,  
MASS 1767



## First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, Massachusetts

**T**HE church in Longmeadow is one of the oldest daughters of the First Church in Springfield, having been set off from that church in 1716. The story of the building of the first meeting house in Longmeadow is well told in the early records of the town.

"April 26, 1714. Voated, to proceed in building of a meeting-hous, and to accomplish it so far as to Raise shingle and Clabbord, the fame by the first day of January next ensuing. Voated, that the meeting-hous be built Thirty Eight foots square."

"February 10, 1715. Voated, to chuse and appoint a Committee to carry on the work of the meeting-hous to the finishing and compleating of the fame. Except the Galries by the Month of April, which will be in the year 1716."

There is evidence in the town records that the house was used for worship in 1716. The many votes passed in town meeting relative to work on the meeting house show that the structure was not completed for some time after it was used for worship and that it became necessary to make repairs on the building before it was finished in all its parts. It is also made clear by the records that soon after the building was completed the question of erecting a new house of worship was agitated.

"January 6, 1769. Voated that the Comtee Chosen for Building the New Meeting Houfe be Impowerd to Dispose of the Old Meeting-Houfe for the use of the Precinct in such time and manner as they shall think best."

Square pews were built in the first meeting house, a few at a time, at various intervals from 1748 to 1755. There was objection to square pews on the ground

that they were aristocratic. March 12, 1716, it was voted that the women should be seated on the west side of the meeting house. The records show that in Longmeadow, as elsewhere, the "dignifying," or seating, of the house of worship was attended with much dissatisfaction, giving rise to heart burnings and jealousies. The minister and his family, the heaviest tax payers, and persons of high standing in the community were given the preference.

For many years the people were summoned to worship by the beating of a drum. The purchase of a bell for the meeting house was under consideration for some time. The records show that a bell was procured as early as December, 1744. In 1808 the sum of \$125 was granted for the purchase of a new bell. May 1, 1809, the sum of \$50 was added to the first grant. This bell, cast by Paul Revere and Son, was rung so violently to declare the joy of the town's people upon the declaration of peace in 1815 that it was cracked, and in August of that year a sum of money was granted for recasting it.

It was at the time of the erection of the first meeting house that the Rev. Stephen Williams, who, at ten years of age, had been taken captive by the Indians at the sack of Deerfield and had received a part of his education in Indian wigwams and among the Jesuits at Quebec, began his ministry of sixty six years in Longmeadow.

The building of the second meeting house was first discussed in town meeting in 1764, and an affirmative vote was passed that year. This was about fifty years after the erection of the first house of worship. The following is taken from an address delivered by Rev. Henry Lincoln Bailey on the 140th anniversary of the raising of the second meeting house :

"The discussion preliminary to the building of this meeting house was lengthy. The matter was well threshed out by a series of not less than nineteen town meetings, extending over a period of two and a half years, before there was a really visible result of all their argument. Early in November, 1764, the precinct voted to build a new meeting house for the public worship of God. Twenty five days later it was voted that the new house be of wood. But by February the mind of the people had changed. They not only voted down the proposition for a new building, but they also refused to repair the old one. Next month they saw the need of repairs, and so voted. There the matter rested ten months until in January, 1766, they ordered a brick house, and in several meetings through the winter voted recommendations concerning its size, equipment, etc., only to nullify the whole series April 10, and next week vote repairs again. A meeting in June enlarged the committee on repairs, but the larger the committee the more hopeless was unanimity; and in September the parish took up the matter once again and by a vote never repealed ordered a timber meeting house, which was raised in 1767 and is standing yet, the oldest Congregational meeting house but one in Western Massachusetts."

The date fixed upon for the raising of this house was June 17, 1767, and a committee was chosen to provide both "victuals and drink" for the occasion.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the day set for the raising, pastor Williams gathered his flock in the old meeting house and "prayed with them." Meetings for prayer were held morning and night each week day while the erection of the new house was in progress. The work was finished on Tuesday of the second week by the raising of the steeple. The night of this day the minister and people went together to the old meeting house, where a service of prayer and praise was held.

This second house was erected a little to the north of the first and stood without important changes for more than fifty years. In 1828 it was remodeled, the pulpit placed in the east end, the galleries rebuilt on the three remaining sides of the church, modern slips

substituted for the square pews, and the porches on the outside removed.

As thus remodeled the second meeting house remained for about half a century longer, a conspicuous landmark of the town. It occupied a commanding position in the center of the long common. The tower, which faced to the west, was built from the ground up and was crowned by a two storied tapering spire, at the summit of which was perched a copper weather-cock. On the south and north sides of the house were two rows of windows. According to the vote of October 30, 1766, the house was fifty six feet long, forty two feet wide, twenty five feet in the clear, and the steeple fourteen feet square and fifty four feet high.

In 1874 the meeting house was moved to a new site in front of the old burial ground and "wholly clothed upon with new beauty under the advice of a competent architect."

Three of the men who preached in this second meeting house prior to the present century are remembered both for their distinguished abilities and their long pastorates. Rev. Stephen Williams ministered to the church from 1716 to 1782, Rev. Richard Salter Storrs from 1785 to 1819, and Rev. John Wheeler Harding from 1850 to 1891, their combined pastorates covering a period of about one hundred and fifty years.

Rev. Henry Lincoln Bailey, the present pastor, writes of the portions of the old meeting house remaining in the structure of to-day: "The frame of the old building is still here, though the interior and exterior are greatly altered in appearance. The house is unique in that it has, despite its modern adaptation, been the scene of every pastor's preaching in the two centuries of church life in Longmeadow."

A famous romance is connected with the Longmeadow church. No more remarkable story is to be found in all New England history than that of the Rev. Eleazer Williams, believed by many to be Louis XVII of France. According to the story, the Dauphin of France did not die in the Temple, but was secretly brought to America, and later left in charge of an Iroquois chief, a half-breed, named Thomas Williams, whose grandmother was the Eunice Williams of the Deerfield raid, sister of the Rev. Stephen Williams of Longmeadow. In 1800 Thomas Williams brought to Longmeadow his two boys, Eleazer and John, to be educated under the care of Deacon Nathaniel Ely, who had married the grandniece of Eunice Williams. Eleazer was converted in the old meeting house, under the preaching of Mr. Storrs, and later educated for missionary work among the Indians. In July, 1822, he engaged in missionary labors among the Indians at Green Bay, Wisconsin, where, in 1841, he received a mysterious visit from Prince de Joinville, eldest son of King Louis Phillippe. Eleazer Williams died in 1858. Any one who wishes to acquaint himself with the details of the strange story of the lost Bourbon will do well to read a paper by the Rev. John Hanson, published in the February number of Putnam's magazine, 1853. The story is also well told by Mary C. Crawford in her interesting book, "The Romance of Old New England Churches."







FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CHICOPEE



MARGARET BELCHER'S SKETCH OF SECOND  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND  
SURROUNDINGS. 1837.

## Some Churches in Chicopee, Massachusetts

### CHICOPEE STREET

**R**UNNING parallel with the Connecticut river, a short distance from the east bank, and extending from the Chicopee river to a point opposite the city of Holyoke, is Chicopee Street, the location of the first meeting house built in territory now included in the city of Chicopee. The first settlement was made here as early as 1675. The records show that Japhet and Henry Chapin "were living in homes of their own" at that time.

Clara Skeelee Palmer, in her admirable work, "Annals of Chicopee Street," referring to Japhet and Henry Chapin, says: "Sons and daughters were born to these brothers and in a few years there were eighty eight grandchildren."

In the ancient records of the First Church of Springfield is this interesting note by the "compiler" for the year 1751: "'Inhabitants of Chicabee' desired to be set off as a parish; of 50 petitioners (males) exactly one half were Chapins." The petitioners actually numbered forty nine, twenty four of whom were Chapins.

Thus began the life of the community. It was Hannah Chapin, daughter of Japhet, whose wedding outfit, when she was married to John Sheldon of Deerfield, contained "a dress suitable to wear into captivity." A few days after the attack upon Deerfield, at which time the young bride was taken captive, an Indian woman was seen wearing the dress.

The first religious meetings were held in private houses, or the school house, and three quarters of a century elapsed after the Chapin brothers built their homes in the region before a meeting house was erected, the people during all this time belonging to "the old Parish in Springfield."

The first parish meeting was held July 30, 1751. Deacon Chapin, in his diary, describing the building of the first meeting house, states that on the evening of January 2, 1751, "all with united voices declared for cutting timber for a Meeting House." The record for June 5th is, "This day thro ye Indulgence of Heaven, we have our Meeting House raised with great joy and satisfaction." The building was not finished until 1765. It was without a steeple or bell and stood in the middle of the street. The following description of the edifice is taken from an article printed some years ago in the Springfield Union: "This meeting house, which stood until 1826, was a square building, with two entrances, one for men and the other for women. The outer siding was of riven oak or chestnut, beaded on the lower edge, each piece about four feet long and three inches wide and fastened with hand made wrought iron nails. The windows were of seven by nine inches glass, in heavy sash and capped with ornamented boxes, which made nice domiciles for martins and bats. The pews were square, with high backs, with small rounds and railings at top, seats on their sides, fronting the center and door on side of the aisle. There were galleries on three sides, with singers fronting the pulpit. Over the pulpit was a sounding board of graceful conical form, and the pulpit, being reached by a flight of perhaps a dozen steps, was so high that the elastic sounding board was essential to keep the theological arguments from failing of their mission by being dissolved in air over the



SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH. CHICOPEE FALLS



heads of the audience. The people came from miles around to attend the services."

The corner stone of the second meeting house, the fine Colonial structure now standing on Chicopee Street, was laid May 12, 1825, and the building was dedicated January 4, 1826. The house when finished "cost four thousand, four hundred dollars, some odd cents." The beautiful mahogany pulpit was a gift from friends of the pastor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Phoenix, and cost \$500.

The writer of this sketch confesses that his admiration for the Chicopee Street house of worship, all things being taken into consideration, is very great. Flat meadow land, farm houses, and distant mountain ranges constitute the natural environment. A short distance to the west of the edifice the

"Winding and willow-fringed Connecticut"

flows quietly on its course southward. A glance at the church and its surroundings shows how refined was the taste of the builders of this meeting house, how keen their perception, and how excellent their judgment. Mrs. Clara Skeele Palmer, in a conversation with the writer, expressed the opinion that Mr. Phoenix, minister of the church at the time the present house was erected, a man of wide information and much knowledge of the world, must have had an important influence in the making of the plans of the church. The building is neither too large nor too small for its environment. The extreme plainness of the main portion is in perfect harmony with the flat meadow country close at hand, while the massive columns of the portico, with their elaborately carved capitals, are suggestive of the ruggedness and grandeur of the mountain ranges to the north and west. All of the parts of the structure are relatively



well proportioned. The quaint green blinds with their fan shaped tops, the well proportioned tower of two stories with its simple classic adornments, and the four large Ionic columns of the portico, excite the admiration of all who are capable of appreciating a fine example of Colonial architecture. Just within the entrance to the auditorium are two splendid Ionic columns, rising from the floor to the ceiling and crowned with beautiful capitals. The mahogany pulpit at the opposite end of the room was originally much higher than at present and a stairway ascended to it on either side. Four mahogany columns, surmounted by Ionic capitals, harmonious with the great columns at the opposite end of the room, once supported the pulpit, but were removed and allowed to go to decay when the attempt was made in 1860 to modernize the interior of the house. It was at this time that the pulpit was lowered; the backs of the pews were also lowered and the doors at the ends of the pews taken off. The pulpit was lowered again in 1885.

The fish which serves as a weathervane is interesting. It is left to the reader to decide whether it represents a Connecticut river shad or the symbol of faith employed by the early Christians.

### CHICOPEE FALLS

The members of the Methodist society in Chicopee Falls may well take pride in their house of worship. They have shown good taste in retaining the pure white color of the exterior. The frieze of the cornice is ornamented by a delicate line of dental work extending around the two sides and front of the building. In front are ten pilasters, which give the house a stately appearance. The spire, consisting of an octagonal base and a slender tapering roof rising above nar-



**METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CHICOPEE FALLS**



GEORGE S. TAYLOR.  
Typical New England Deacon

row windows set in pilastered casings, is most graceful. The church is one of the best examples of the old order of houses of worship in the region. A large gilded comet serves as a weather vane. One of the leading members of the church is of the opinion that the comet was chosen for this purpose because it is symbolical of the demonstrative nature of genuine Methodism. Perhaps it was intended to remind the people of the destruction of the world in the fiery catastrophe foretold in 2 Peter 3: 10-12, and call them to repentance.

In the days when Methodism was not so popular as it is now and the adherents of that denomination in Chicopee Falls could not easily find a convenient place in which to hold their services, prayer meetings were held under an old buttonball tree near where the Griggs' lumber yard is now established. The first building erected by the Methodists in Chicopee Falls was built in 1826 on the east side of Broadway, where their present house of worship stands. This house was sold in 1841, and in the following year the edifice now standing at the junction of Broadway and East street was erected at a cost of \$4,500.

**CONGREGATIONALISM** in Chicopee Falls had its beginning in 1822, when the Rev. Samuel Osgood held occasional preaching services in Mr. Benjamin Belcher's house. A little later the place of meeting was changed to the Ames paper mill on the north side of the Chicopee river. In 1828 arrangements were made by General A. Nettleton and others by which a school house was occupied by the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists—each denomination having control of the house one Sunday of each month in the year.

July 1, 1830, a Congregational church of thirty three members was formed under the name of the Fifth Congregational Church in Springfield. April 17, 1831, the name of the church was changed to the First Congregational Church in Chicopee Factory Village, Springfield; and finally, May 10, 1848, when the town of Chicopee was incorporated, the title Second Congregational Church of Chicopee was adopted by the society.

The first house of worship used by the Congregational society was erected in 1833. The building was one story in height, seventy two feet long, forty six feet wide, and had a tower sixty feet high. The water-color sketch of this house made by Margaret Belcher in 1837 gives a good idea of the building and its surroundings. Miss Belcher, now in her ninety third year, says that she painted the picture from a chamber window in her father's house. She was at the time a student in Wilbraham Academy and was detained at home for a few weeks, caring for her invalid mother.

Extensive improvements were made upon the church in 1859, amounting to more than \$4,000, including the cost of an organ. From this time the double bass viol and flute were heard no more in the services of praise. Accompanying this sketch is a most interesting account of the dedication of the improved house of worship, in the hand writing of the late Timothy W. Carter, transcribed by him from the Chicopee Journal of October 22, 1859.

Mr. Timothy W. Carter came to Chicopee Falls when sixteen years of age, and from that time until his death in 1890, at the age of eighty years, he occupied a leading place in the business, religious, and political life of the place. The letter from John Brown reproduced here, was written to Mr. Carter, who was at the time agent of the Massachusetts Arms Com-

From Chicopee Journal Oct. 22, 1859.

Dedication. - The Congregational Church at Chicopee Falls, was dedicated Wednesday afternoon 19<sup>th</sup> inst. The exercises were very interesting and the house was crowded with people to listen to and take part in them. The order of exercises was as follows. - Voluntary on the organ. Singing - Anthem by the choir. (Set us go into the house of the Lord.) Devocation and reading of the Scriptures by the pastor of the church Rev. F. F. Alvord. Singing Hymn - Anthem. ("Old Denmark"). Prayer by Rev. Mr. Thurston of Waltham. (formerly pastor of this church). Singing Hymn. - Sermon by Rev. E. P. Rogers D.D. of Albany N. Y. - Dedication prayer by Rev. D. Clarke of Waltham. Singing - (Dismissal Anthem) Benediction by the pastor. Voluntary - Full Organ.

The sermon was a treat and was listened to with profound attention. The singing under the direction of Mr. V. H. Taylor was worthy the occasion, and as a matter of course one of the most attractive exercises connected with the dedication services. Mr Taylor has the happy faculty of pleasing all who listen to him on such occasions.

Great praise is due him, and also to the excellent and thoroughly trained choir under his direction for their skillful rendering of their part of the services.

The organ just completed for the church by Johnson of Westfield gave perfect satisfaction. The singing of "Old Denmark" by the choir on Wednesday was worthy of particular notice. The piece was introduced to give the "Old Folks" an opportunity of joining with the choir. It was sung with fine effect.

Oswatimie, Kansas Territory, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>y</sup> 1856

I W Carter Esqr Asst  
Chicopee Falls  
Mass }

Dear Sir

Your kind favour of the 5<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> was received a few days' since: mentioning receipt of Draft & offering a further supply of arms. I would again immediately take the responsibility of ordering another lot, but I am not at this moment prepared to say how I would dear to have them directed. The other lot I came on with myself; bringing with them other Arms contributed by the friends of Freedom in Mass & other parts. I cannot just now name any one who is coming on: suitable to take charge of them. Sen Pomeroy went East lately; but I do not now know where a letter would find him. I now think I shall immediately make a furth<sup>r</sup> more earnest appeal to the lovers of Freedom in New England for the means of procuring Arms; & Ammunition for the maintenance of that cause in Kansas; as I think the Crisis has not yet come. I firmly believe that the Administration intends to drive the people here to an abrupt submission; or to fight the Government troops (now in the Territory ostensibly to remove intruders from certain Indian lands). Bow in submission to the vilest tyrant or be guilty of what will be called Treason; will I believe be the result, & only alternative for the Free State men of Kansas. O God! must this thing be? Must the people here shoot down the poor Soldier with whom they have no quarrel? Can you not through your extensive acquaintance aid me in this work; if you can be satisfied that I am trust worth thy. I am well known by many at Springfield. I very much want a lot of the Carbiner as soon as I can see any way clear to pay for them; & then to get them through safe. Please write me the lowest term at wholesale for just such Carbiner or you furnish the Governor month. I may write you further within few days

Very Respectfully Your Friend

John Brown

pany and who was deeply interested in the cause of human freedom. A perusal of the letter enables one to form an impression of the character of the man who called on Mr. Timothy W. Carter in Chicopee Falls one day and invoked assistance in his efforts to save Kansas to the cause of Freedom. Miss Mary H. Carter well remembers John Brown's call at her father's house and describes him as a tall serious looking man with a gray beard. What an impassioned cry to God for Freedom is the letter written from Osawatimie in 1856! In his invasion of Virginia and the Harper's Ferry affair Brown was mistaken in judgment, but his heart was undoubtedly right and his motive commendable. The God of nations overruled for good the rashness of the man, and the cause for which John Brown gave his life triumphed gloriously in the conflict of arms which speedily followed the martyrdom of this zealous and resolute opponent of slavery.

Mr. Charles A. Stein, advertising agent of the J. Stevens Arms and Tool Company of Chicopee Falls, Mass., states in a pamphlet written sometime ago that a close friendship existed between Mr. J. Stevens and John Brown. Mr. Stevens was a pronounced abolitionist and, according to Mr. Stein, the pistols used by Brown in his raid at Harper's Ferry were made by Stevens and sold by him personally to Brown at Chicopee Falls only a short time before the historic raid. Mr. I. H. Page, president of the J. Stevens Arms and Tool Company, confirms Mr. Stein's statement. The cut of the John Brown letter accompanying this sketch was made from the original letter, now in the possession of Mr. N. P. Ames Carter, of Chicopee Falls, having been handed down to him from his father, Timothy W. Carter.



The late George S. Taylor, who was for more than three score years a member of the Second Congregational church and a deacon of the church for over half a century, kept a diary from his twenty first birthday, March 2, 1843, until his death, January 3, 1910.

Deacon Taylor wrote in his diary June 12, 1859,

"Services were held in the church for the last time, Rev. Mr. Alvord delivering a sermon appropriate to the occasion. All preparations are completed and the church ready to be removed."

The entry for June 14 of the same year reads :

"The church was moved today and looks much better." June 26, he wrote, "The church looks as if it was on stilts."

The entry for June 28 is as follows :

"The corner stone of the church was relaid this morning at 7.30 o'clock by Rev. Mr. Alvord. Mr. Alvord made some remarks. Also Rev. Mr. Clark, pastor of the First Church, and Mr. T. W. Carter. Mr. E. P. Nettleton deposited the box. The choir were present and sang and we had quite a little gathering."

According to Deacon Taylor's diary, work on the spire of the church was begun July 26, 1859. September 15, he wrote :

"The staging around the spire was taken down as far as the old tower and the spire presents a fine appearance."

Deacon Taylor's records of improvements in the church refer to the changes made upon the building in 1859, when it was moved back from the street ten feet, raised up one story, and a spire built. His records show that in 1872 extensive alterations of the interior of the church were made, by which the organ and choir were removed to the east end of the audience room, the pews and pulpit renewed, and the vestry remodeled and refurnished. October 11, 1872, rededicatory services were held, the pastor Rev. Dr. Tucker preaching the sermon.

In 1875 extensive improvements were made in the vestry of the church, the expense of which was generously borne by Mr. T. W. Carter.

The beautiful spire of the church, having been damaged by lightning in a terrific thunder storm, July 22, 1903, was taken down and the present tower with its classic adornments constructed in its place. The church standing as it does on the brow of the hill, a short distance from Main street, is a reminder of former days, when most of the substantial citizens of Chicopee Falls had their homes in the neighborhood and no additions to the population had been made by immigrants from Ireland and Canada and Poland. The accompanying map of Chicopee Falls, made by Mr. T. W. Carter, bears no date, but was evidently made about 1839. The Congregational church, which is sketched in the upper right hand corner of the map, was built in 1833, whereas the cottage located on the south east end of the Carter homestead, which was built as early as 1843, does not appear in the map. Miss Mary H. Carter, daughter of Mrs. T. W. Carter, and Mr. E. Dwight King, a life long resident of Chicopee Falls, are both of the opinion that the map was made about 1839.





FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, EASTHAMPTON



## First Congregational Church Easthampton, Massachusetts

**T**HE members of the First Congregational Church in Easthampton recently celebrated the one hundred and twenty fifth anniversary of the organization of their church. The Springfield Republican, the day following the celebration, contained the following brief outline of the church's history:

"The church was organized November 17, 1785, at the house of Captain Joseph Clapp. There were seventy two original members, forty six dismissed from the Northampton church and twenty six from the Southampton church. Rev. Payson Williston was called April 6, 1789. Previous to that Rev. Aaron Walworth preached. Rev. Mr. Williston was ordained August 13, 1789, age twenty six. Stephen Wright and Benjamin Lyman were the first deacons. Rev. Mr. Williston served until March 11, 1833. He died in 1856. Rev. William Bement was the next pastor, serving from 1833 to 1850, when Rev. Rollins S. Stone was installed. Rev. Mr. Stone served until 1852, when he became pastor of Payson church. He was succeeded by Rev. A. M. Colton, who remained 27 years.

Then came Rev. S. G. Wood, now of Blandford, who served thirteen years. He was followed by Rev. J. D. Stoops. The present pastor, Rev. G. H. Burrill, has been in charge about five years. The first building stood on the present site of Main street park, and the present church was first located on Main street where North hall of the Seminary now stands. The building was erected in 1836 and 1837. It was enlarged in 1844 and more spacious galleries built, owing to increase in members, some of it due to the establishment of the Seminary. It was removed in 1865 from the original site to its present site. The Payson and Methodist churches are offsprings of the old First Church.

Rev. Payson Williston, the first pastor, was the father of Samuel Williston, who founded the Seminary, started Easthampton's industries, etc. Samuel Williston and Rev. Solomon Lyman were largely instrumental in the establishment of the first Sunday school in 1818.





THE OLD CHURCH, ASHFIELD





THE BEAUTIFUL SPIRE, ASHFIELD

## The Old Church in Ashfield, Massachusetts

**T**HE first meeting house built in Ashfield stood near where the village cemetery now is.

About 1800 this structure had become unfit for a place of worship and the question of building a new meeting house was discussed in town meeting. The people being unable to decide upon a location for the new house, it was finally agreed that a committee of three disinterested persons, one each from Conway, Plainfield and Hawley, should be called in to place the stake for the meeting house. Such a committee was chosen and promptly performed their duty, setting the stake "on the hill near Reverend Mr. Porter's house," and admonishing the people that party feeling should be allowed to subside and the Christian society be united in the bonds of friendship and live in peace. The person chosen to build the new house of worship was Colonel John Ames of Buckland, Mass. He did not live to finish the structure. But other hands completed the work which he had begun and the new meeting house was ready for occupancy in 1814. It was regarded as one of the handsomest churches in the state, the tower being especially admired. Mrs. Charles Eliot Norton is said to have remarked that she was influenced to make her home in Ashfield by reason of the beautiful spire of the old meeting house. In recent years several well known architects have visited Ashfield and obtained pictures and plans of the church.

In 1820 the town conveyed the church to the Congregational parish, and in the same year stoves were first used in the building. In 1857 the edifice was moved to its present location in the village. Ten

years later, a union of the two churches in the village being effected, after having been used as a house of worship for fifty three years, the edifice was conveyed to the town of Ashfield and converted into a town hall. In this building the well known Sanderson Academy dinners have been held for many years and on these occasions some of the most noted speakers in the country have been present. Not far from the site of the old church are the summer homes of the late George William Curtis and Professor Charles Eliot Norton. Mr. Curtis presented the fine vane on the steeple.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ENFIELD, CONN.



INTERIOR OF THE ENFIELD CHURCH

## Congregational Church Enfield, Connecticut

**T**HE first meeting house in Enfield, a small temporary structure, was built in 1684; and was probably located on the site of the old cemetery. The second house was erected in 1706 and stood in the highway west of the present post office. In 1775 a third meeting house, the building now used as a town hall, was erected on ground a little west and south of the present house of worship.

In a sermon preached on "Old Home Sunday," July 17, 1910, Rev. David L. Yale, pastor of the Enfield church, said of the third meeting house and the action taken towards erecting a new edifice: "The meeting house was in need of repairs. For nearly seventy years it had grown old in service for the community. It was the pride of Enfield in Revolutionary days; but, as age had increased, pride had decreased, until, in 1871, there were evident signs of discontent."

December 25, 1877, Henry A. Abbe was authorized to secure subscriptions for a new meeting house. But it was not until Colonel Augustus G. Hazzard interested himself in the matter that the many obstacles in the way of the movement for a new house were removed and a building committee, of which Mr. Hazzard was the leading member, actually appointed. The date of this action was January 29, 1848. The plans for the new edifice were drawn by F. M. Stone, a New Haven architect. The building was completed early in 1849 and dedicated February 4th. In the Connecticut Courant for February 24, 1849, we read: "The church reflects great credit upon the arch-

itect and the builder. The plan was drawn by F. M. Stone, Esq., of New Haven. The edifice was built by Mr. Newton Moses, of the same place, and painted in fresco in the inside by those distinguished artists, Molini and Allegri, of the city of New York."

The Church is regarded by many as one of the best examples of Colonial architecture in New England.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, EAST HADDAM, CONN. 1794





INTERIOR OF THE EAST HADDAM CHURCH

## **Congregational Church East Haddam, Connecticut**

**T**HE Congregational church in East Haddam, Connecticut, is one of the best examples of early Colonial architecture. The interior is said to have been patterned after King's Chapel in Boston. The edifice was built in 1794 and has been preserved in all of its essential characteristics. It had originally the "sheep-pen" pews and high pulpit with sounding board. A noon-mark is cut on one of the front door steps. The building is sixty four feet long, forty four feet wide and has an extension in front four feet in depth and eighteen feet long. On the outside doors of the church are large hand forged latches.

In 1902 Mr. George G. Williams, then president of the Chemical Bank of New York city and a native of East Haddam, gave the church a large and commodious chapel with all the modern improvements.

The present church is the third house of worship used by the society. The first house was made of logs and was built in 1705. It was thirty two feet square. The second edifice was built after a more elaborate fashion in 1728. It was fifty five feet long and forty feet wide, and stood a short distance from the site of the first house. The site of the present house is a considerable distance from that of the first edifice and the change of location was the occasion of a violent church quarrel, resulting in the formation of an Episcopal church.

The photographs from which the accompanying halftones were made were taken by the daughter of the present pastor of the church, the Rev. Franklin Countryman.





FIRST CHURCH, EAST HARTFORD, CONN. 1835



## First Church of East Hartford, Connecticut

**“S**TANDING sentinel at the main entrance to the town’s highway, our church also stands boldly and largely and immovably for the town’s righteousness and welfare.”

In these words the historian of the First Congregational church of East Hartford lovingly referred, in a recent historical address, to his church edifice, and to the place which it holds in the community. Mr. H. S. Pitkin, of East Hartford, in a recent letter to the author writes: “The imposing meeting house, now 75 years old and in excellent condition, is a good example of its period, especially in its exterior, which remains practically as it was first designed. It stands at the junction of Connecticut Boulevard, that broad, mile-long stretch of road which joins on to the great stone arch bridge across the Connecticut river at Hartford, and the main street of East Hartford, the latter famous for its rows of ancient elms along either side and in its center. ‘The Old White Church,’ as it has been called for generations, dominates its locality and lends its name and something of its dignity to ‘Church Corner,’ which one passes in a trolley ride between Hartford and Springfield.”

For half a century after the company under Rev. Thomas Hooker in the summer of 1636 established themselves at Hartford, the people dwelling on the east side of the “Great River” worshiped in meeting houses on the west side of the river. In May, 1694, the east side people petitioned the General Court for the “liberty of a minister” on their side of the river.

Their petition was granted in 1701, and the church was organized sometime between that date and May 13, 1702. In 1783, when the town was separated from Hartford, the name of the church was changed to the First Congregational Church in East Hartford.

The first meeting house of the society was a long time in the process of construction and was a bare and uninviting structure. Its site is now known as "Meeting House Green" and is marked by a large boulder, bearing an appropriate inscription. The building was erected in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

The second house of worship was built in 1740 on substantially the same site as that of the first structure. It was a plain bare edifice, but much larger than its predecessor. The building was used as a hospital by the French army in 1781-2. It had a high and somewhat ornate pulpit on the west side with a huge and ornamental sounding board over it "like a great extinguisher." It had no steeple and there was no bell to call the people together.

It was torn down in 1835, after having been used as the home of the society for almost a century, and the available material used in the construction of the third house of worship, the stately structure of the present time.

This third house was patterned after the meeting house in New London and was built by Mr. Chauncey Shepard of Suffield. The raising took place in June, 1835. "There was ample provision of crackers and cheese, lemonade and water, but no rum." The edifice was dedicated January 20, 1836. The town contributed \$1,000 toward the erection of the building and was allowed to use the basement room "for the purpose of transacting public business on the days of election and town meetings only." A more suitable

place for public meetings was finally provided through a bequest made by the late Jonathan T. Wells. In 1876, while the late Dr. T. T. Munger was serving the church as stated supply, the house was badly damaged by fire and underwent extensive alterations on the inside. At this time the old pews were removed, the pulpit platform lowered, and the ceiling altered and frescoed. The time honored broad aisle also disappeared, a change which was greatly lamented by many.

March 8, 1894, the church was incorporated, and in March, 1895, the ecclesiastical society, which had existed for almost two hundred years, having finished its mission, was dissolved.

That the church in its early history had a good degree of Congregational independence is shown by the fact that March 29, 1748, a formal protest was made against sundry articles of the platform adopted by the synod convened at Saybrook in 1708.

The most notable pastorate in the history of the church is that of Rev. Eliphalet Williams, D. D., installed in 1748 and remaining with the church until his death in 1803, serving fifty three years as pastor and two years as pastor emeritus. He was the son of Rev. Solomon Williams, D. D., of Lebanon, and grandson of Rev. William Williams, of Hatfield, Mass. His brother William Williams, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Williams was in several respects a great man. At the inauguration of Dr. Stiles as president of Yale College, Dr. Williams delivered an oration in Latin. He preached the sermon at the funeral of Governor William Pitkin, which was held in the East Hartford meeting house. Parson Williams, who was also known as "Priest" Williams, was a strict disciplinarian and a good deal of a tyrant in the administration of the



affairs of the church. He was devoted to his pipe and loved his flip. The Parson Williams' house stood until recently on Main street, near the site of the first meeting house. It had a famous old doorway, a gambrel roof, and was "a study in architecture" both within and without.

Another notable pastor of the East Hartford church was Dr. Samuel Spring, who was settled in 1833 and continued in active service as pastor twenty nine years. John B. Smith in an address delivered at the two hundredth anniversary of the church described Dr. Spring as "the gentleman, the peace lover, the kind neighbor, the thoughtful friend, prompt, self-forgetful, self-depreciating, honored and loved by all who knew him." The church has had in its membership many men of great influence in town and state affairs. In 1763 a board of elders was instituted, corresponding to the present prudential committee, which consisted of Honorable William Pitkin, governor of the colony, Jonathan Hills, John Pitkin, William Cowles, William Pitkin, Jr., Samuel Smith, Isaac Porter and Richard Gilman.

Through the efforts and generosity of Colonel Solomon Olmsted, the famous temperance reformer, John B. Gough, made almost annual visitations to East Hartford and delivered his wonderful lectures to enthusiastic audiences.

The first superintendent of the Sunday school was Major Samuel Pitkin, a foremost citizen of East Hartford.


Rev. William C. Prentiss is the present minister of the church.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, FARMINGTON, CONN. 1771



## The Congregational Church in Farmington, Connecticut

CTOBER 13, 1652, seven men, afterwards called "the seven pillars of the church," entered into an engagement to form a church. The society has had three houses of worship. The first was a rude structure used as a fort as well as a house of worship and its site is unknown. The second house was completed in 1714 and resembled the meeting houses of that period. The date on the foundation stone of the third building, the present well known structure, is 1771. The architect and builder of this house was Captain Judah Woodruff. The design resembles in a general way that of the Old South Church of Boston. The spire of the church, which is one hundred and sixty feet in height, shows the influence of Sir Christopher Wren and is the crowning glory of the church. There are no bolts in the steeple, but simply good oak timber and pins. The tall Gothic roof of the tower was completed below and raised to its place.

The famous Connecticut blacksmith and apostle of peace, Elihu Burritt, in an address describing his first sight of Farmington, says: "I clambered up Sunset Rock and, sitting down on the edge with my feet over the side, looked off upon the scene with a feeling like that of a man first coming in view of Rome and its St. Peter's. I had never before seen a church with a steeple, and measuring this above us with a child's eye it seemed to reach into the very heavens. This steeple crowned all the wonder I saw."

The interior arrangement of the church was in general the same as at present. The pulpit stood opposite the west door. Along the walls on every side of the gallery was a row of square pews. On the high pulpit and sounding board were ivy vines carved by Captain Woodruff.

In 1836 extensive alterations were made in the interior of the house; the square pews and the high pulpit and sounding board were removed at this time. In 1731 a bell was purchased, and a town clock was placed in the tower in 1738. In 1901 the interior of the church was completely renovated. The pulpit now in use was given by Miss Martha Day Porter and her sister in memory of their grandfather, Dr. Porter. The fine organ was given by Miss Anna Jennings of New York in memory of her beloved teacher, Miss Sarah Porter. In 1902 a beautiful parish house was erected in memory of Miss Porter by her pupils.

Rev. Noah Porter, D. D., born in Farmington December 23, 1781, was ordained as minister of the Farmington church in 1806. He served the church as pastor until his death in 1866. He was the father of Rev. Noah Porter, D. D., LL. D., who was president of Yale College at the time the writer of this book was a student in that institution and from whose hands he received his college diploma in 1882.

September, 1810, nine men appointed by the General Association of Massachusetts as members of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions met in Dr. Porter's study in Farmington and completed the organization of this first Foreign missionary society in America. Governor Treadwell, a member of the Farmington church was the first president of the Board.

The following is from "The Hartford Magazine" for July, 1906: "Shakespeare speaks of 'the spire and



INTERIOR OF THE FARMINGTON CHURCH



top of praise.' The beautiful spire of the Farmington Congregational church for more than a century has gracefully held its position at the top of praise among all church spires of its chaste style of beauty. It is generally conceded to be the daintiest and most exquisite lined church spire in rural America."

For most of the facts given in this sketch the writer is indebted to an article written some time ago by Rev. Quincy Blakely, the present minister of the Farmington church.







CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WETHERSFIELD, CONN. 1761



## The Wethersfield Meeting House

**T**HE corner stone of the present house of worship was laid in 1761, the builders taking as a model the Old South church of Boston.

In outward form the edifice is substantially the same as when built. A small porch was erected over the south door in 1830, which gave place in 1882-3 to the present handsome vestibule and porch. Originally the windows were filled with small panes of glass. Blinds were not used until 1827. In 1868 windows with large panes were substituted for those of small size and when the interior of the church was remodeled in 1882-3 stained glass windows were put in. This is the third meeting house that has stood on or near the site of the present edifice. The first was begun in 1645 and probably completed in 1647. It stood a short distance south of the site of the present house. It has been described as a small square building with a belfry, a north and a south door. It was made of logs. The interior was wainscoted and it was clapboarded without. In 1657 a bell was hung in the belfry and galleries were added in 1675.

The second meeting house had carved upon its corner stone the date of 1685, the year probably in which the erection of the building was begun. This house stood near the old site. The old bell was hung in the belfry of the new house and used for about a year, when it was recast and enlarged. This second house was fifty feet square and had dormer windows. There were no galleries until 1701-2. The first pews were built in 1715 and others were added in 1735.

It was during the history of this structure that a branch of Yale College was established at Wethersfield and seats were assigned in the house of worship to students of that institution. Some of the material of this building was used in the erection of the present edifice. The old bell, which had been recast for the second building, was used in the new house for a quarter of a century. In 1786 a new bell of more than fifteen hundred pounds weight was cast. It was raised to its place in 1787 and the name of John Chester, who superintended without pecuniary compensation the building of the present house, was inscribed upon it. In 1875 this third bell was broken while being rung. In consequence it was taken down, recast and enlarged to a weight of more than two thousand pounds. It was raised to its place November 5, 1875. Some of the material in this bell has been used to call the people of Wethersfield to divine worship for more than two hundred and fifty years.

The tower of the church, like that of the Farmington house, is made of oak timber and pins, no iron bolts being used in its construction. The spire is famed for its grace and beauty.

It is believed that the first settlement in Connecticut was made at Pyquag, now Wethersfield, in 1634. The settlers came from Watertown, Massachusetts. The first ecclesiastical organization appears to have been effected in 1641. It was from this church that Rev. John Russell and a large company, on account of a religious controversy, removed to Hadley, Massachusetts, in 1659. Mr. Russell was minister of the church from 1650 to 1659. For further account of Mr. Russell the reader is referred to the sketch of the Hadley church, page 61.

Rev. George L. Clark, author of "Notions of a Yankee Parson," a book brimful of common sense and

sparkling humor, is the pastor of the Wethersfield church. The writer thinks that his readers will be interested in a few quotations from Mr. Clark's book.

The man of seventy cannot run as fast as the man of sixteen, but his opinion is worth more when he gets there. We owe a large debt to Dr. Osler for telling us that "the effective, moving, vitalizing work of the world is done between the ages of twenty five and forty," because he stimulated an inquiry which has led us to see that it is not so.—Chapter X. The Later Years.

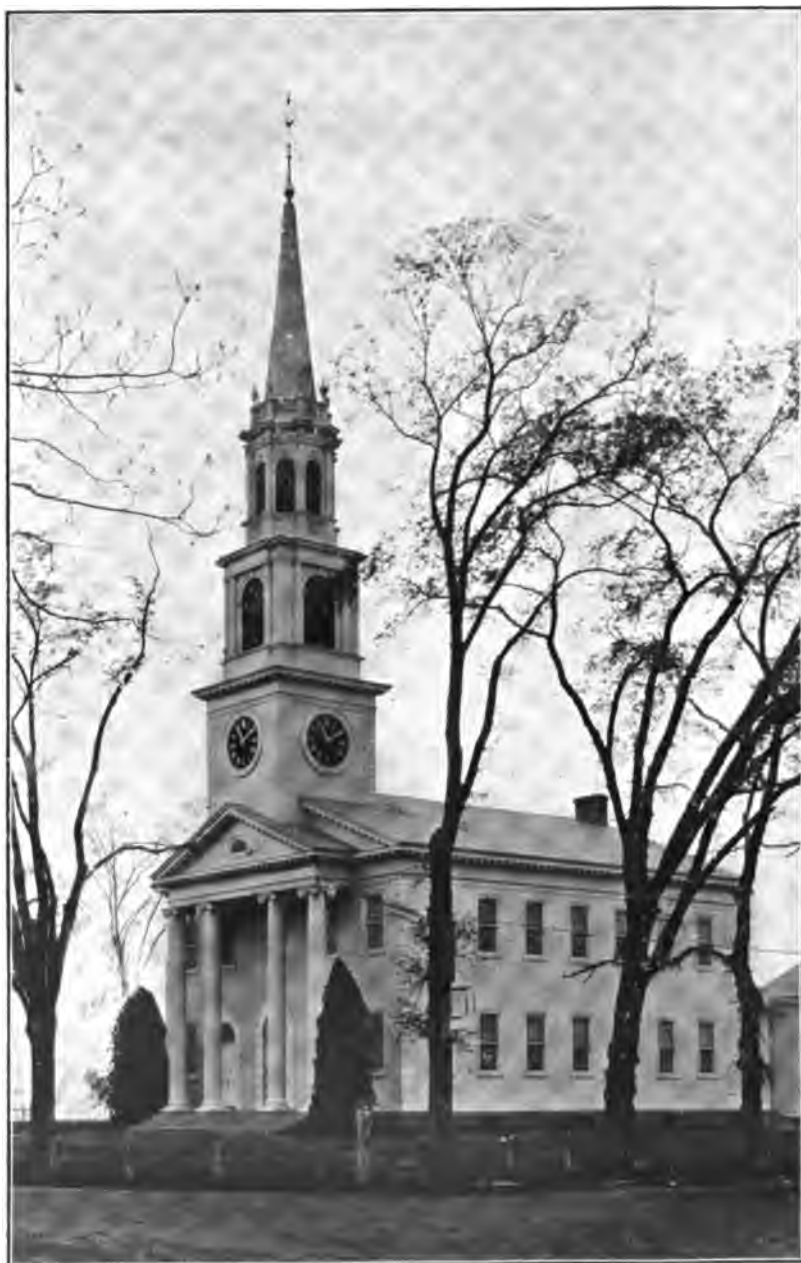
This is the receipt for a fine day almost four hundred times a year: Equal parts of courage, kindness and patience, preserved in a crystal vial of purity, taken every morning before breakfast whether the sun shines or the clouds frown.—Chapter III. The Weather.

The country parson must know how to harness a horse, milk a cow, plant a garden, paint a room, tinker the clock, and make hens lay.—Chapter XII. Optimism, The Minister's Business.

We are here to play the game to the finish, to find the treasure in every part of life, and to use it, man-fashion.—Chapter IX. The Use of the Remainders.

If there is any time when the country parson is most sorely tempted to indulge in worldly pride and to look down in pity upon his less fortunate though more famous city brothers, it is when he goes out into his garden.—Chapter II. The Parson in his Garden.





THE BEAUTIFUL COLONIAL MEETING HOUSE, OLD LYME, CONN.





## Old Lyme, Connecticut

**T**HE new and beautiful house of worship at Old Lyme, Connecticut, is evidence of the respect of the present generation for the ideals and achievements of the fathers. What could be more appropriate than the preservation in the new house of worship of the main features of the ecclesiastical architecture characteristic of former generations! How identical with the traditions of the past is the fashion of the present house of worship! What could be more beautiful or imposing in its historical environment than this house! According to tradition, a house of worship was built on Meeting House Hill as early as 1668. This is believed to have been a small log building and was used for about a score of years. The second meeting house was erected in 1689, close to or upon the site of the first. The third house of worship was built about 1738 and stood upon Meeting House Hill, like its predecessors. The specifications in the plan for the building of this house called for a structure sixty feet long, forty feet wide and twenty four feet between sill and plate. The General Court was petitioned to appoint a committee to determine the site, as the society could not agree upon one. There is a tradition that in 1780 the roof caught fire from the wad of a musket, which had been fired at marauding wood-peckers, and that a squadron of light horsemen stationed in the town helped to put out the fire. In 1815 the building was struck by lightning and burned. Its successor was the beautiful Colonial structure which became so widely known and admired. It was built in the years 1816-17, on a site about three quarters of a mile from where the former meeting

houses had stood. It was about the same size as its predecessor. For designs for the new building several of the best houses of worship in the state were studied. According to tradition the work for the most part was done by ship carpenters. How great was the skill of the workmen and how excellent the taste of the designers was plainly shown by much of the woodwork. During the closing years of the past century and the first years of the present century the church became widely known. Paintings were made of it by several artists of distinction and one painting of it was recently shown at the International Exhibition in Venice. This noble structure stood for upwards of a century, the just pride of the inhabitants of the town and much admired by visitors from abroad. It was completely destroyed by a fire of unknown origin, July 3, 1907, the ninety second anniversary of the burning of its predecessor. In a letter to the writer of this book the pastor of the Old Lyme church, Rev. Edward M. Chapman, writes as follows of the present house of worship, an illustration of which appears in connection with this sketch: "The new building is practically a replica of the old; an exact replica as to front, sides, spire, and so forth as far as we could reproduce the old from photographs. The interior is a reproduction of the old, with a simplification of certain decorative features introduced when the apse was built about 25 years ago; and it is very successful."

The architect was Mr. Ernest Greene of New York. The edifice is substantially built of steel, cement-plaster, concrete and wood. The best quality of clapboards was used to cover the cement, thus protecting the cement from the weather and naturally restoring the old appearance as well as the old lines of the church. The corner stone of the new house was laid November 8, 1908, and the church was dedicated June

18-19, 1910. It represents an expenditure of about \$50,000.

Two facts stand out in this brief historical sketch. First, there has been a house of worship on or near the site of the present building for about two and a half centuries. Secondly, in the building of the successive meeting houses steady advance was made in architectural effect, resulting in the noble structure described in this sketch and shown in the accompanying illustration.





THE OLD TOWN MEETING HOUSE, ROCKINGHAM, VT. 1787



**INTERIOR OF ROCKINGHAM CHURCH SHOWING HIGH PULPIT AND  
SOUNDING BOARD**

## The Old Town Meeting House Rockingham, Vermont

**E**ACH year the people of Rockingham, accompanied by a large number of visitors, make a pilgrimage to the famous old town meeting house, on which occasion a service is held in the edifice and a sermon preached by some prominent clergyman. During the services some of the most familiar Psalms are read responsively and the old hymns of the church are sung by the congregation. The following beautiful hymn by J. G. Whittier, entitled, "Nature's Worship," was sung at the service held August 1, 1909 :

The harp at Nature's advent strung  
Has never ceased to play:  
The song the stars of morning sung  
Has never died away.  
And prayer is made, and praise is given  
By all things near and far :  
The ocean looketh up to heaven  
And mirrors every star ;  
The green earth sends her incense up  
From many a mountain shrine :  
From folded leaf and dewy cup  
She pours her sacred wine.  
The blue sky is the temple's arch ;  
Its transept, earth and air ;  
The music of its starry march,  
The chorus of a prayer.  
So Nature keeps the reverent frame  
With which her years began ;  
And all her signs and voices shame  
The prayerless heart of man.

The following sketch is taken from the admirable "History of Rockingham," by Mr. L. S. Hayes, of Bellows Falls, Vermont :



"The only church building in Vermont dating back to Colonial days, which retains the original characteristics in its interior, as well as its exterior, is that located in the little hamlet of Rockingham. Leaving the broad valley of the Connecticut near the mouth of Williams river, where, in the winter of 1704, the first Christian sermon was preached in the almost unbroken wilderness of the territory which afterward became the state of Vermont, by the Rev. John Williams, then a captive in the hands of Indians who had taken him, with over a hundred others, in the Deerfield massacre, we proceed up the valley of the river which bears his name. One who looks for the picturesque and the quaint is soon delighted to catch glimpses of a severely dignified, simple, white structure, standing on a considerable eminence overlooking the valley and seeming to dominate the landscape. As one comes nearer and rounds the foot of the hill itself he finds himself in the quiet little village of Rockingham, familiarly known as 'Old Town.'

It was here that the first settlements in the town were made in 1752, with the expectation that it would be the social and business center of the town, and here that the early settlers, in 1772, voted that "the Meeting house be Set on the hill west of David Pulsipher's house about thirty or forty Rods." It was a quaint and beautiful custom of those days which set the Lord's house always upon a hill, in the midst of the town, a silent and lofty guardian watching over the affairs of men in the valley below. The meeting house of the first church organized in Rockingham, a type in itself of the stern, unyielding dignity of those rugged characters, stands hard by the graves of those who once made the life of the community, overlooking the Williams river valley and the peaceful farms below. It is a landmark for many miles and attracts every year many visitors from a distance.

The interior is of severest Puritan outline, the only deviation from the rectangle being an inclosed two-story 'porch' at each end, from which the stairs ascend to the gallery. The windows are many, and contain each forty panes. The pulpit, which was originally reached by a winding stairway, has been lowered a few feet, but otherwise the interior is unchanged since the days when the good people from the farms in the neighborhood laboriously climbed the hill to sit without fires, with freezing feet, and benumbed hands through sermons two hours long, or convened on week days to transact the weighty business of the town.

The pews are of the old square, high backed style, the outer or wall row, being raised slightly above those in the corner of the room. The spindles which once ornamented the backs of these seats have

been ruthlessly removed as curiosities, as have been the hinges which once creaked on Sabbath afternoons as the door of the pew swung back to admit the good man and his family,—the children in somber anticipation of long hours of imprisonment on good behavior, to be alleviated only by rare and meagre dolings of fennel and caraway seeds from the capacious depths of maternal pockets.

This building, so interesting and quaint, is an object lesson in itself of the architecture and methods of building in old Colonial days, dating back, as it does, to the years when Vermont was a sovereign state without ties to other states or nations; when all citizens, irrespective of creed or without creed, were taxed by the government for the support of the gospel, as well as for other purposes for which taxes were imposed by the laws of the commonwealth.

It was built by the town itself, the various votes in relation to it being passed in town meeting and the expense paid directly from the town treasury. In addition to its use for church purposes it was used for all town meetings until 1870, after which the town business was transacted in Bellows Falls. It was the only public building owned by the town until 1887, when the present brick structure known as the opera house was erected in Bellows Falls, just one hundred years later than this town church was built. The regular church organization, organized along the broad lines of Congregationalism previous to the building of the church was kept in being until 1839, and until this year sustained a local pastor most of the time. At sundry periods the building has been used by various religious denominations, but since 1839 it has not been regularly occupied by any. The town very appropriately authorizes the selectmen to keep the building in good repair, the outside being neatly painted, and the roof well shingled, but the inside has had but little expended in keeping it in repair and curiosity seekers have somewhat marred its beauty. Substantially, it remains in the primitive condition of the 18th century, a silent, and yet eloquent, reminder of the days when church and state were one, and when there was a universal interest throughout the community in spiritual things."

The master builder, who directed the erection of the old meeting house described in the sketch by Mr. Hayes, was General Fuller. He lived on a farm in the town of Rockingham. It is said that at the time of the raising of the frame of the edifice "Mr. Fuller quietly

took his place on the beam and went up with the front broad side."

On the opposite side of the house from that shown in the accompanying picture of the exterior of the building are two interesting entrances with classic embellishments. During the early years of the town, notices of important public meetings were posted on the front door of the old church. Here also were published all matrimonial banns and intentions of marriage. The following unique notice was posted on the door of the meeting house March 15, 1804:

"Notice,—John Parks Finney and Lydia Archer, of Rockingham, came to my house, and having been published agreeably to law,—but he being a minor and not having his father's consent, I refused to marry them. They, however, declared that they took each other as husband and wife, meaning to live and do for each other accordingly.  
Samuel Whiting, Minister."

This appears to have been a kind of free love marriage.

Since Mr. Hayes wrote his sketch of the edifice, parts of the building, which had been removed or had decayed, have been restored. At this time the old pulpit was restored. August 12, 1907, the house was rededicated, a large crowd attending the exercises. Some one, writing of the old church since the work of restoration was completed, says, "It is now a beauty in its quaintness."



INTERIOR OF ROCKINGHAM CHURCH











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